



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

It's Time for NYS Attorney General Eric Schneiderman to Investigate Price Gouging for Prescription Medication

RUBEN DIAZ September 30, 2015

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW By Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz District 32 Bronx County, New York Tel 718-991-3161

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You should know that after reading an article on September 20, 2015 in *The New York Times*, written by Andrew Pollack titled "[Drug Goes From \\$13.50 a Tablet to \\$750, Overnight](#)", I learned about the atrocities that our senior citizens and vulnerable New Yorkers are subject to because of price gouging for prescription medication by some New York-based pharmaceutical companies.

You should also know that every year since 2009, I have submitted legislation to allow for the State of New York to purchase bulk prescription drugs from Canada for our seniors. My Senate bill mirrors what is perfectly legal in Schenectady County in upstate New York, and while it has been routinely ignored, now is the time for Senate Bill S470 to get passed and signed into law.

[Senate Bill S470](#) is an act to amend the elder law, in relation to the New York state prescription medication cost containment program. Its purpose is to enhance cost savings by the NYS EPIC program in procurement of prescription medications for recipients of the state's EPIC program.

With all of the publicity about the gluttonous price gouging that exists in the pharmaceutical industry, I am confident that my colleagues will review Senate Bill S470 and push it through the Senate.

You may know that in response to media reports about the skyrocketing overnight increases in Turing Pharmaceutical's drug that treats a life-threatening parasitic infection in HIV and cancer patients, even Presidential Candidate Hillary Clinton tweeted: "Price-gouging like this in the specialty drug market is outrageous."

It troubles me to wonder how the pharmaceutical industry can, in fact, gouge tons of prescription medicines as a matter of routine. Who is to say that these exorbitant costs won't eliminate certain necessary treatment for our seniors and for people with disabilities?

My dear reader, we are on another "quality of life" slippery slope.

As the Ranking Member of the New York State Committee on Aging, I remain insistent that no senior citizen in New York State should ever have to decide if he or she will eat or get their prescription medication, nor should they be forced to move to Schenectady County to do afford their prescription medication.

New Yorkers who remain outside of Schenectady County pay much higher prescription prices than who reside there - because Schenectady County residents are allowed to benefit from Canada's bulk prescription prices. The rest of New York State deserves these cost-effective benefits, too!

I am urging my colleagues in government and for all New Yorkers to review my Senate Bill S470 and take action so that our seniors don't get swept up into debt or even worse - deprived of the health care they need and deserve.

With the passing of my Bill S470, the State of New York will also save more than one billion dollars that could be used other ways, e.g. education, housing, social services, senior citizen programs, etc.

You should know that I am calling upon New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman to investigate price gouging for all New York-based pharmaceutical companies involved. I also ask that Eric Schneiderman, along with any interested investigative reporters and journalism students to delve into the records of campaign contributions made by our pharmaceuticals. Which companies donate and who receives their donations?

I am also asking for New York State Senator Kemp Hannon, Chair of the State Committee on Health, to hold public hearings to investigate these issues.

The protection and well-being of our senior citizen population in New York State should take precedence and should be on the top of every elected official's agenda.

I am Senator Reverend Rubén Díaz and this is what you should know.