



AFSCME WV Retirees News



With Election Over, Drug Makers Hike Prices on Popular Drugs

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'Labor Donated'



"Seniors are getting squeezed from all directions when it comes to their health care," said **Ruben Burks**

Drug makers have increased prices on their most popular drugs, in some cases by as high as 11%. The Wall Street Journal reports that of the 50 highest selling drugs, 31 had price increases from November 2004 to January 2005. Pfizer's blockbuster drug, Lipitor, rose 5%. The increases, which far outpace inflation, will have a significant impact on America's seniors who account for 34% of all prescription drugs dispensed. Industry observers believe the drug compa-

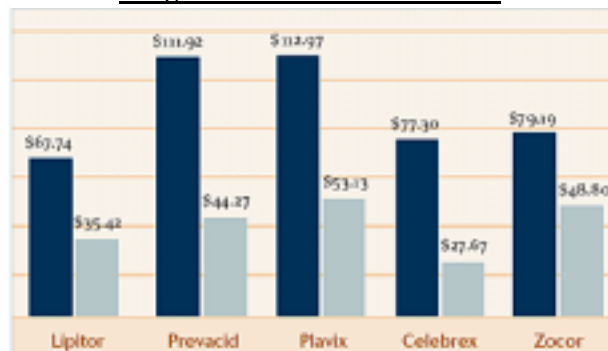
nies purposely timed price increases after the election to deflect any political pressure. Some analysts say increases are a way for drug companies to position themselves before Medicare's drug benefit begins in 2006. The Medicare drug benefit is likely to increase the volume of drugs sold yet the law specifically prohibits the government from negotiating lower prices.

"Seniors are getting squeezed from all directions when it comes to their health care," said **Ruben Burks**, secre-

tary-treasurer of the Alliance. "Last year's record increase in Medicare premiums, skyrocketing drug prices and closing the pipeline to Canada are adversely affecting our most vulnerable citizens. Older Americans should demand immediate action on costs that are spiraling out of control."

During the presidential campaign, President Bush promised to consider bipartisan legislation to legalize low-cost drug imports from Canada. Shortly after he won re-election, the president's advisory panel determined that reimportation was unsafe. Millions of Americans currently engage in the practice as well as state governments and there has never been a case of a patient being harmed.

Drug Prices—U.S. verses Canada



Message from the President

Greetings Fellow Retirees,

I trust you had a great Holiday and that all is well with you and yours. I am sure you can share with me the joy of looking forward to spring and all it brings. Especially lower heating costs.

With every opportunity I am continuing to fight for our needs and expressing concerns to our government leaders. I attended and spoke at the PEIA Finance Board Meetings and the PEIA Public hearings concerning the premium increase to be effective July 1, 2005.

I had the privilege of serving on Governor Manchin's transitions team. Again, I made our needs known to various interest groups.

I attended every day of the January 2005 Special Session of the Legislature speaking to all who would listen. The Special Session passed a bond issue that will bring a Statewide vote to restructure the unfunded liability of our pension system. The state wide vote could come as early as this fall. We should have more information regarding the planned reconstruction in the near future. The additional information will help us understand the reconstruction making us an informed voter.

The regular session of the Legislature begins February 9, 2005. I intend to be there every day as a voice for the retirees. My wish would be that each of you could join me for at least one day of this

Legislative session. A great time to join me would be Lobby Day (see information regarding Lobby Day in this issue).

When Governor Manchin was running for office, he told us he really cared about the issues of the retirees. I believed him then and I believe him now. I encourage you to write Governor Manchin a letter reinforcing the needs facing the Retiree. (address below).

Fraternally yours,

Earnest "Spud" Terry

Gov. Joe Manchin III
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, E.,
Charleston, WV 25305

Toll-Free: 1-888-438-2731



'The regular session of the Legislature begins February 9, 2005. I intend to be there every day as a voice for the retirees.'

Social Security: Get the Facts

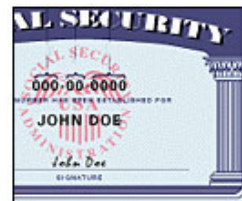
MYTH: "Personal accounts will enable a worker to be able to pass on his or her ownings to whoever he or she chooses, which is an important part of promoting an ownership society. We want people to own and manage their own assets."

-President George Bush on Social Security, 1/26/05

FACT: Truth is the reality would produce a lot less individual control than President Bush claims.

All the major proposals being considered for private accounts would place big limits on how much money individuals can

invest, where it can be invested, what they can do with it when they retire and how much they can pass on to heirs.



Choose your sources of information carefully and get the truth.

(source: William M. Welch, "Social Security Accounts Would Limit Control," USA Today, 1/26/05)



West Virginia Public Employees Legislative Brunch and Briefing



Governor Joe Manchin, Speaker Bob Kiss, President Earl Ray Tomblin, Treasurer John Perdue, Auditor Glen Gainer, Attorney General Darrell McGraw, Secretary of State Betty Ireland, DOH Commissioner Paul Mattox, Secretary of DHHR Martha Walker and a variety of Delegates and Senators have been invited to speak or attend as well as special guests.

Our Issues: Cola Raises, Collective Bargaining, PEIA problems, Privatization, Retirement increases and improvements & others will be discussed with top elected officials.

DATE: February 21, 2005 (President's Day Monday)

TIME: 9:00 AM - Noon (Optional Capitol visits after)
~Free Full Brunch menu served~

WHERE: Culture and History Building—Great Hall
(On the west side of the Capitol behind the
Governor's Mansion in Charleston)

For Directions or more information, call AFSCME
Council 77 at 1-800-642-1983 www.afscmewv.org



Free and all
members invited.



Your Retirees Statewide Chapter 77 officers at a recent monthly meeting. (From left to right seated): Rachel Craddock, Eddie Harman, Earnest 'Spud' Terry, Jean Teel & Eloise Jack.' Standing: Mrs. Sherry Harman and Mr. Jack

If you mail your annual dues to Retirees Chapter 77 rather than have it deducted from your retirement check (\$1.00 per month), mail your annual dues of \$12.00 for 2005 to:

AFSCME Retirees
501 Leon Sullivan Way
Charleston, WV 25301

Thank you, Rachel Craddock, Secretary-Treasurer

Did you know that your state wide Executive Board meets every month in Charleston between the annual membership meetings? If you have issues or suggestions for the Board to consider, mail it to the address above .

You will be happy to know that your state wide Vice President and long time AFSCME activist Eddie Harman from McDowell County is recovering well from the terrible auto accident he was in in early 2004. He still has some rehab and at least one more surgical procedure, but everyone was happy to see Eddie without the head/neck brace called a "halo" he has wore for over 10 months.

AFSCME WV Council 77, AFL-CIO
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Charleston, WV 25301

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WV Chapter 77 Officers:

Ernest "Spud" Terry, President

Eddie Harman, Vice President

Eloise Jack, Rec. Secretary

Rachel Craddock, Sec-Treas.

Jean Teel, Executive Board

Patricia Tyree, Executive Board

Juanita Auer, Executive Board

Edna Comer, Trustee