



Durbin issues statement on his HHS announcement to require disclosure of prescription drug prices in TV ads

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SPRINGFIELD – U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) today applauded the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announcement to issue regulations requiring pharmaceutical companies to list prices of their prescription drugs in direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertisements. In November 2017, Durbin [introduced](#) the *Drug-price Transparency in Communications (DTC) Act* that would require the pharmaceutical industry to provide more transparency about the cost of drugs in their advertisements to American patients. In August 2018, a similar Durbin measure to support mandatory price disclosures in DTC ads, co-sponsored by U.S. Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Angus King (I-ME), [passed](#) the Senate as part of the Labor-HHS-Education/Defense appropriations “minibus” funding bill.

"Today's announcement by Secretary Azar is welcomed news, and I commend him for working with me to put American patients before Big Pharma. When my legislation to require price tags in DTC ads recently passed the Senate, it was supported by both Democratic and Republican senators, the American Association of Retired Persons, the American Medical Association, the American Hospital Association, America's Health Insurance Plans, 76 percent of the American people, President Donald Trump, and the Department of Health and Human Services. The only group who opposed it? Big Pharma.

"When I first introduced my bill last year, what I wanted to do was to give the American people more information about drug costs. More information gives transparency to the transaction, it empowers patients, and will help give American consumers a break and start to slow down the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs."

Last year, the pharmaceutical industry spent more than \$6 billion in DTC advertisements, which drive up health care costs by steering patients towards more

expensive, often unnecessary medications. The average American sees nine DTC prescription drug ads each day. Studies show that patients are more likely to ask their doctor for a specific brand-name medication, and doctors are more likely to prescribe one, when they have been marketed directly with drug advertisements. For these reasons, most countries have banned DTC prescription drug advertising, with the United States and New Zealand being the only two developed countries that allow it. The American Medical Association has called for a ban on DTC prescription drug advertisements, as well as mandatory price disclosure as part of prescription drug marketing.