

Durbin Slams Eli Lilly On Insulin Pricing Scheme, He Views Costs Extremely Unfair

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today on the Senate floor slammed Eli Lilly – a pharmaceutical company that manufactures insulin – following an announcement that it would be selling a less expensive, “generic” version of its rapid-acting insulin, Humalog. Humalog was introduced in 1996 and cost \$21, but today that same vial now can cost as much as \$329. Eli Lilly announced it would lower the price to \$140 in the United States for some patients, while in Canada a patient can still buy Humalog for as little as \$38.

“I’m not going to be sending any flowers and I’m not going to express any great gratitude that is charging Americans under this new ‘bargain’ approach almost four times what Canadians are paying for the exact same product,” said Durbin. “To the other drug companies that are involved in this and producing insulin: America’s watching. If you’re going to continue to hike the cost of this life-saving drug, pressure is going to grow politically and even to the point where the United States Senate may take action. I think that day is coming.”

Video of Durbin’s remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#).

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Footage of Durbin’s remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#) for TV Stations.

Last week, Durbin announced a new series of awards that he will be presenting regularly to the most egregious cases of pharmaceutical greed. The first “Pharma Fleece Award” was given to Eli Lilly – along with Novo Nordisk and Sanofi – the three pharmaceutical companies that manufacture insulin, which has experienced a price increase of more than 600 percent over the past two decades in the United States. United States represents only 15 percent of the global insulin market, yet generates nearly half of pharma’s revenue on insulin. Lantus, a popular long-acting insulin, cost \$35 when it was first introduced in 2001. Within the past few years, the price of Lantus vial has skyrocketed to more than \$372, while that same exact drug was sold in France for \$46, and \$67 in Canada.

Last week, Durbin, along with Senators Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), and Tina Smith (D-MN) urged the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to speed up approvals of lower-cost, generic insulin products in order to help lower costs of the life-saving drug. In a letter to FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, the Senators called for the agency to amend recently issued guidance that poses unreasonable approval delays for new, lower-cost insulin competitor products—and may effectively freeze review of lower-cost competitor insulin products, potentially blocking approval of “generic” or “biosimilar” insulin for two years.

In order to deter Big Pharma’s greed and price-gouging, Durbin introduced the Forcing Limits on Abusive and Tumultuous Prices (FLAT) Prices Act last month. The FLAT Prices Act would reduce the FDA-granted exclusivity period for a drug whose price increases more than 10 percent in a year, or similar amounts over a multi-year period. Drug manufacturers would be required to self-report their price spikes to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and they would have the opportunity to provide an appeal to justify such a price increase. Failure to report such a price hike would incur additional reductions in market exclusivity.

