

Sen. Vukmir and Rep. Rohrkaste: Lead bipartisan effort to lower drug prices

Posted on Wednesday, Nov 1, 2017

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MADISON, WIS. — Sen. Leah Vukmir, R-Brookfield, and Rep. Mike Rohrkaste, R-Neenah, unveiled a bipartisan bill Wednesday that would help patients get interchangeable versions of biologic prescription drugs and save them money.

This bill allows pharmacists to substitute biologic drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration with their generic counterpart, called interchangeable biosimilars. Currently, pharmacists can only substitute generic forms of drugs produced chemically. This bill will now replicate that procedure for biologically created drugs and their biosimilars.

Patients are expected to get an estimated 20-percent savings by purchasing a biosimilar drug, as opposed to the brand-name version.

“Everyone knows that buying generic versions of brand-name prescription drugs can produce significant savings for families and seniors,” said Vukmir, a nurse and chairman of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. “Now that science allows us to create biosimilar drugs, we need to work to make sure Wisconsinites can get these savings at the pharmacist whenever possible.”

“This bill will help improve healthcare outcomes and use healthcare dollars more efficiently,” Rohrkaste added.

Sen. Tim Carpenter, D-Milwaukee, and Reps. John Spiros, R-Marshfield, and Debra

Kolste, D-Janesville, have joined this effort as co-authors.

Biologic drugs have helped improve the quality of life for people with arthritis, cancer, leukemia, MS, diabetes, and epilepsy. Thirty-five states have passed similar laws to help consumers get access to interchangeable biosimilar drugs.