

Wisconsin OCI: First Prescription Drug Task Force meeting highlights complexity of prescription drug pricing and charts process for making recommendations

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Madison, Wis. - The Governor's Task Force on Reducing Prescription Drug Prices met for the first time today to begin the work of identifying solutions to lower costs for prescription drugs. Comprised of stakeholders from across the health care industry, consumers, legislators, and state agency officials the task force will meet monthly beginning in January. The task force will produce a set of recommendations to the governor by the fall of 2020 focused on reducing the price of prescription drugs in Wisconsin.

"I appreciate each member of the task force dedicating their time and expertise to the goal of making prescription drugs more affordable for all Wisconsinites," said Deputy Insurance Commissioner and Task Force Chair Nathan Houdek. "This is a complex challenge but one that we are confident can be addressed by bringing together a diverse and knowledgeable group of stakeholders. The bottom line is that no one should have to choose between paying for their heating bill or paying for their prescription medications."

The costs of prescription drugs have continued to increase in recent years with Wisconsinites spending an estimated \$1.3 billion on prescription medications and supplies in 2019. As prescription drug costs continue to increase, so do the

challenges Wisconsinites face in affording their medications. One in four Americans have reported struggling to afford their prescription medications. A 2018 study also showed that nearly one in four Americans reported that they or a family member were not able to fill a prescription, had to cut their pills in half, or skipped doses because of the excessive cost.

The first task force meeting featured an update from the Wisconsin Department of Justice regarding ongoing prescription drug lawsuits in which Wisconsin is involved. Staff from the National Governors Association also presented on the prescription drug supply and financing chain and on state and federal actions that have been taken to address prescription drug access and affordability.

The next meeting of the Governor's Task Force on Reducing Prescription Drug Prices will be held in Milwaukee in January.