

Protect Our Care: How high drug costs hurt children

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WISCONSIN — Today, Protect Our Care is kicking off week 8 of **Lower Rx Summer** with a [report](#) cosponsored by MomsRising and Little Lobbyists underscoring how high drug costs hurt children. Throughout the week, Protect Our Care will host events and release additional research to demonstrate the urgency for reform to bring down drug prices for children.

Remaining Theme Weeks for Lower Rx Summer

Week 8 (July 26): How High Drug Prices Hurt Children

Week 9 (August 2): Expanding Medicare Benefits—Dental, Vision, and Hearing

Children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP are more likely to have access to their prescription drugs, however, the children's uninsured rate in states that have rejected Medicaid expansion is nearly [double](#) the rate in states that expanded the program. Between 2016 and 2019, the number of uninsured children increased by more than [700,000](#). The Urban Institute estimates that more than [6 million](#) people would enroll in Medicaid if the remaining states implemented expansion, including some children who are currently eligible for the program, but would newly enroll as their parents seek coverage.

“Nothing is more heartbreaking than a sick child, and it is unconscionable that so many families in our country can't afford the medications their children need,” said **Tasmiha Khan, Campaign Director for Health Care at MomsRising.**

“Lawmakers should act now to ensure that all families can access prescription drugs for their children, without being forced to sacrifice essentials or go into debt to pay for them. We need Congress to take action to reduce the cost of prescription

medications now.”

“Many of our families rely on the innovation and development of life-saving medications to treat and sustain our children with complex medical needs and disabilities. Those medications, however, are only life-saving if the patient can afford them,” said **Elena Hung, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Little Lobbyists**. “Therefore, we call on Congress to give Medicare the power to negotiate for lower drug prices so our families can access the life-saving medications our children need to survive and thrive.”

“It’s shameful that children are forced to bear the burden of Big Pharma’s profit motivations,” **said Protect Our Care Executive Director Brad Woodhouse**. “American families should not have to pay three times more for the same medicines as people in other countries. Children and their families should not be put in the impossible position of choosing between paying for lifesaving drugs and paying for housing or food. It’s time to put an end to Big Pharma’s greed and give Medicare the power to negotiate for lower drug prices.”

In 2019, the House of Representatives passed the Lower Drug Costs Now Act (H.R. 3), historic legislation that would lower drug prices for all Americans. H.R. 3 would save patients over \$150 billion and reduce the price of the costliest drugs by as much as [55 percent](#).

Not only does giving Medicare the power to negotiate help patients at the pharmacy counter, but it would save the federal government [\\$500 billion](#), which could be reinvested to strengthen health care. These savings could help lower premiums, expand coverage, and strengthen Medicare benefits to include hearing, vision, and dental. As the nation recovers from the coronavirus pandemic, ensuring access to affordable health care, and specifically prescription drugs, has never been more critical.

KEY POINTS

- **Economic and racial inequity limit access to needed medications for children.** [One in seven](#) children live below the federal poverty line. Factors contributing to systemic racism make children of color more than [twice as likely](#) to live in poverty. Children living in households with incomes below [\\$40,000](#) per year have an increased likelihood of struggling with prescription costs.

- **Big Pharma's price gouging puts millions of children at risk.** [More than one in five children](#) take prescription medication, many for chronic conditions. A recent report found that children zero to four are nearly [five times more likely](#) to experience anaphylaxis than their adult counterparts, but many parents are forced to send their children to school without lifesaving medications due to [EpiPen](#) price increases.
- **Government action is essential to improving health outcomes for children.** Even young children are being charged nearly [three times](#) what patients in other countries are spending on the same prescription drugs. Health coverage, specifically Medicaid and CHIP, helps shield children from pharmaceutical corporation's price gouging, yet more than [eight percent](#) of children remain uninsured in states refusing Medicaid expansion.

Read the new report on how high drug costs hurt children [here](#).