

Protect Our Care: How high drug costs hurt women

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WISCONSIN — Today, Protect Our Care is kicking off Week 4 of **Lower Rx Summer** with a [report](#) underscoring how high drug costs hurt women. 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 women.

Remaining Theme Weeks for Lower Rx Summer

Week 4 (June 28): How High Drug Prices Hurt Women

Week 5 (July 5): How High Drug Prices Hurt People with Disabilities

Week 6 (July 12): How High Drug Prices Hurt People of Color

Week 7 (July 19): How High Drug Prices Hurt Small Businesses

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

Women are [more likely](#) than their male counterparts to use prescription drugs. Economic and social inequality leave women with lower pay and less wealth, making it harder to afford health care. Women are also more likely to be caregivers, leaving them responsible for purchasing medications for family members. As a result, women are more likely than men to skip needed prescriptions because of cost. This problem is only getting worse: A 2019 Gallup [poll](#) found that the gender gap for prescription drug affordability is growing, with 28 percent of women unable to afford a prescribed medication in the previous year, compared to 18 percent of men.

“It’s clear the current system is unjustifiable and unsustainable for all Americans,

but particularly for women who carry more of the burden from the high prices of prescription drugs,” **said Protect Our Care Communications Director Anne Shoup.** “Americans should not have to pay three times more for the same medicines as people in other countries, and unfortunately more women are finding themselves in the possible 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

- **Gender disparities restrict prescription drug access.** The gender pay gap leaves women with lower incomes and reduced ability to pay for needed medications. More than [one in four](#) women reported not filling a prescription due to cost. This inequity is compounded for women of color.
- **Prescription drug use is more prevalent among women.** More than [half of women](#) take prescription medication, making drug costs a regular stressor for millions. With age, medication use increases, disproportionately impacting women who live an average of five years longer than their male counterparts.
- **Big Pharma’s price gouging disproportionately impacts women.** Several of the [highest grossing](#) prescription drugs are used in the treatment of diseases that disproportionately impact women.
- **Drug pricing reform would benefit women.** [80 percent](#) of Americans understand drug prices are skyrocketing because of Big Pharma’s bottom line, with 75 percent stating they do not have confidence in drug manufacturers to set fair prices.

Read the new report on How High Drug Costs Hurt Women [here](#).