

Committee to Protect Health Care: Wisconsin physicians blast Johnson for voting against Inflation Reduction Act, lowering prescription drug & health care costs

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Legislation will allow Medicare to negotiate Rx prices, extend ACA subsidies

MADISON — Wisconsin physicians today criticized Sen. Ron Johnson for voting against the Inflation Reduction Act, which will lower prescription drug prices and provide financial support for Americans who buy health coverage through the marketplace. They also shared their disappointment that he voted against an [insulin price cap](#) for Americans with private insurance.

“When Wisconsin families need someone in Congress to be their champion and help reduce their health care bills, they can always count on Sen. Ron Johnson to be ‘Dr. No’,” said Dr. Ann Helms, critical care neurologist in Milwaukee and CTP’s Wisconsin State Lead. “When he could have helped reduce prescription drug costs and get affordable health care to more Wisconsinites, Sen. Johnson simply said ‘no’ – no to cheaper medications, no to smaller out-of-pocket costs, and no to more accountability for the same drug and insurance corporations that are squeezing patients and their families.”

Part of a budget reconciliation measure, the health care provisions that the Senate voted on today would:

- Empower Medicare to negotiate lower costs for certain expensive prescription medications;
- Limit out-of-pocket costs that seniors and people with disabilities who rely on Medicare pay for their medications to no more than \$2,000 per year, down from more than \$7,050;
- Extend enhanced federal subsidies for Affordable Care Act coverage for three years.

“Once again, Sen. Ron Johnson is turning his back on seniors and families across Wisconsin who need relief from the high cost of health care,” said Dr. Kristin Lyerly, OB/GYN and member of CTP’s Reproductive Freedom Taskforce in De Pere. “As a physician who has served my community for years, inside and outside of the exam room, I know firsthand that too many families are literally skipping their medications because prescription drugs simply cost too much. No family should have to worry whether they can afford the medications their doctor prescribes to protect their health and their lives – and Sen. Ron Johnson has provided zero solutions.”

An [AARP report](#) notes that prices went up in 2022 for 75 of the 100 brand name prescription drugs with the highest Medicare Part D spending in 2020. For the [more than 19 million older Americans](#) in Medicare Part D who use these 75 drugs, the costs add up. Medicare beneficiaries need around four or five medications. If brand name medications cost an [average of \\$6,600 per year](#), older Americans are paying tens of thousands of dollars every year to manage chronic conditions.

Meanwhile, an estimated [125,000 people die](#) because of medication non-adherence, while up to 69 percent of medication-related hospital admissions are the result of poor adherence.

Additionally, increased access to health care can vastly improve the health and well-being of Americans of all ages. [More Americans than ever have health coverage now](#) through the ACA as well as the [American Rescue Plan Act](#), which provided enhanced subsidies for low- and middle-income Americans to access ACA coverage.

Extending these subsidies before they expire at the end of the year will ensure that [13 million Americans](#) can continue to afford their health care, including more than [290,000 people in Wisconsin](#).

“When Sen. Ron Johnson had the opportunity to provide financial relief for Wisconsin families, he dropped the ball,” said Dr. Bob Freedland, an ophthalmologist in La Crosse. “Sen. Johnson refuses to do the bare minimum to make lives a little easier and health care a little more affordable for the millions of Wisconsinites he represents. As a physician, I have no confidence that Sen. Johnson is willing to fight for my patients and his constituents, and for a U.S. senator, that is a failure of leadership.”

The physicians said the measures Johnson voted against are common-sense solutions to protect health and save lives — and also overwhelmingly popular. Polling shows that [83 percent](#) of all Americans support allowing the federal government to negotiate Medicare drug prices, and [two in three voters](#) support renewing the enhanced ACA subsidies, including roughly three in five independent voters.

Insurance corporations and pharmaceutical companies are among Johnson’s [largest campaign contributors](#) in his congressional career from 2009-2022.