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**Human Right to Affordable Prescription Prices**

**By Lynda Appell**

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The human right to affordable prescription drug prices  
by mugwort, 12th June 2001.

I deliberately chose current events, activism, human rights because I truly believe that reasonable prescription medication prices should be the right of everyone in every nation.

I and many other health consumers believe that the cost of prescription medications are much too high. In fact the general concensus is that they are grossly, unfairly expensive.

The truth is it is far from rare for people on fixed incomes to have to literally choose between food and their health!!! I think this is terrible and frankly I hope you do too.

It isn't just persons with limited incomes. It's also working class and middle class persons with no prescription plan or no health plan for that matter who have to suffer.

Now you might be thinking, sure I feel sorry for these folks, but I don't have to worry. My drugs are included in my plan. Well if your health care provider gives you a prescription for a medicine that isn't covered, well to put it politely, "tough toughies". Unless you're able and willing to pay the sky rocketing prices you might as well forget it.

Fact: Health Maintenance Organizations all have a formulary. If your medication isn't on it they won't pay for it. Maybe if you ask for a special request they will but that's rather iffy.

Here's a few examples of how pharmaceutical companies rip off the public. Television, popular magazine advertizing. Perhaps you've seen or read these ads. They make the new drug sound like practically the e ighth wonder of the world. Notice they rarely mention prices.

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The US Govt. permits pharmaceutical firms to wring every penny from us by allowing them to spend \$10,000,000,000 on advertising and bribes. According to the health division of Public Citizen (Ralph Nader—founder,director) most of the drug companies money goes to advertizing and not research and development. Please let me repeat that. Most of the money pharmaceutical firms spend goes to advertizing and NOT research and development. So according to Sidney Wolf MD, the head of the health division of Public Citizen when the pharmaceuticals argue they need to charge those enormous prices for research and development they are lying. The source for the above was "Public Citizen" and Citizens for Consumer Justice, "University Medical Research Publishers".

Lavamisole, brand name Ergamisol costs approximately \$10.00 for sheep. To fight reoccurrence of colon cancer in humans, they have to spend \$200.00 per month.

Prescription medications with exactly the same ingredients, identical standards in Canada, Mexico,

Europe are half what they are in the US.

Note. I only know about these areas. If anyone can tell me about other continents please do so.

The National Cancer Institute spent \$30,000,000 in developing, proving Taxol works on various cancers. It than gave it to "Squibb to finish the testing. In other words the company saved much in research expenses.

They still charge at least \$6000.00 per year per patient.

Even more expensive is Ceredase for Gaucher's disease. It's close to half a million per year. There are probably many other examples, but I don't want to make this editorial too long.

I will end with this quote from the medical journal "Biological Psychiatry" "The overall influence of the healthcare industry is to emphasize drug treatment at the expense of other modalities.

...It focuses attention on disorders that are treatable by drugs and may promote over–diagnosis. It reinforces the practice of dealing with disease by treatment of symptoms and diverts interest from prevention."

Authors J. Wortis, A. Stone"The addiction to drug companies" Biol. Psychiatry 32:847=9,1992. In other words emphasis on expensive drugs.

Bottom line. The US Government needs to step in and do something about the cruel, unfair, unreasonable prescription drug prices.

Disabled disability activist for over twelve years in various local Phila.PA disability rights organizations.

### **Hardwood Flooring - The Next Generation**

#### **By Prescription Drug Web Guide**

For a long time, Americans who are increasingly facing low supplies and high costs have been heading north to purchase their prescription drugs at stores in Canada. The volume of business is

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expected to be millions of prescriptions filled every year. And during recent elections, many candidates ran on platforms seeking to legalize the practice that many citizens are engaging in whether it is illegal or not.

To combat both the election hopefuls and the United States citizens who are currently ignoring the pricy prescription drugs on American shelves, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America is claiming that many imported drugs are unsafe. There is more evidence to the contrary, however.

Many of the prescription drugs that are available on American pharmacy shelves quite legally, are already manufactured in and shipped from foreign countries. This is counter to the PRMA's assertions that imported drugs are unfit or dangerous. Many industry insiders agree that the association is representing solely the interests of American pharmaceutical companies, who directly benefit from inflated drug prices. Like many other countries, Canada's prescription drugs, like the prescription drugs of every industrialized nation with the exception of the United States, are kept relatively inexpensive due to price controls.

The FDA is in step with the PRMA, although it is similarly vague in assertions that buying prescription drugs in Canada is dangerous. In an interview with Kiplinger's, William Hubbard, the FDA's associate commissioner for policy and learning, stated "We know there are good drugs and bad drugs in Canada, but we can't tell you which ones are which."

The fact is, most Canadian prescription drugs are not FDA approved, however Canadian food and drug standards are comparable to those of the United States', and the argument that Canadian prescription drugs are unsafe, remains fairly unsupported. So far, the stream of American buyers seems to indicate the belief that buying prescription drugs from a reputable Canadian drug store is only dangerous to the large American pharmaceutical companies who have a vested interest in keeping drug prices high.



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