

# The Time To Act Is Now: Lower Drug Prices For All Americans

## Drug Prices In West Virginia

- In 2017, [24 percent](#) of West Virginia adults reported skipping doses of medication or not filling prescriptions because of cost concerns. Polling has shown that [nearly three quarters](#) of West Virginians are concerned about prescription drug prices.
- According to the [West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy](#), between 1991 and 2014, per capita spending on prescription drugs in West Virginia grew by an average of 6.8 percent per year, from \$304 per capita to \$1,377, faster than all other health care spending
- [Hundreds of thousands](#) of West Virginians have chronic conditions like cancer, diabetes, and heart disease that require prescription drugs for treatment and management, and [89 percent](#) of West Virginians either take a prescription medication on a regular basis or live with someone who does.

Prescription drugs are prohibitively expensive for too many West Virginians.. Drug prices [skyrocketed](#) under former President Donald Trump. And despite countless [promises](#) to take action, Trump and his Republican allies in Congress blocked reform at every turn. Instead, Republicans rewarded Big Pharma with [massive](#) tax breaks, and drug companies continue to line the pockets of shareholders and CEOs while raising prices for everyday Americans.

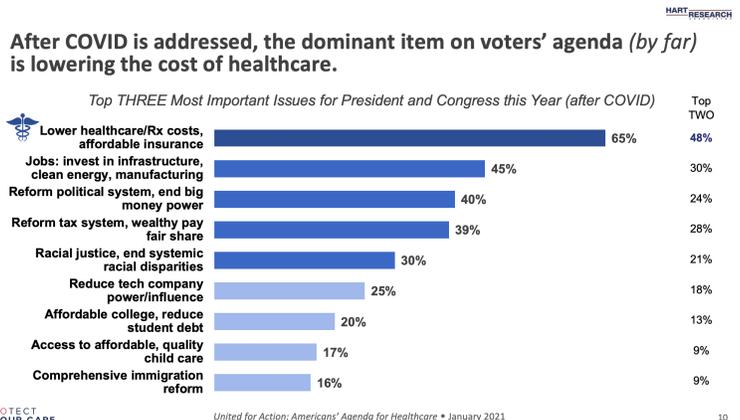
After four long years of broken promises, President Joe Biden and Democrats in Congress are now working to end the rigged system for drug companies and finally lower drug costs for American families. In 2019, House Democrats passed the Lower Drug Costs Now Act (H.R. 3), bold legislation to give Medicare the power to negotiate for lower drug costs - the single most effective measure to bring down drug prices. As the nation continues to battle the coronavirus pandemic, ensuring access to affordable health care, and specifically prescription drugs, has never been more critical. The time to act is now.

## Polling Reveals The True Cost Of High Drug Prices In West Virginia

### High Drug Prices Are Plaguing Americans

#### Drug Pricing Is A Top Issue For Americans.

Polling has consistently [shown](#) that after addressing COVID-19, the top issue for voters is lowering health and drug costs. A January 2021 Morning Consult poll found that [96% of voters](#) said lowering drug prices is an important challenge facing Americans. Another recent Harvard-POLITICO poll found drug pricing was a top priority for Americans, with [87% of](#)



[respondents](#) saying the issue is "extremely important."

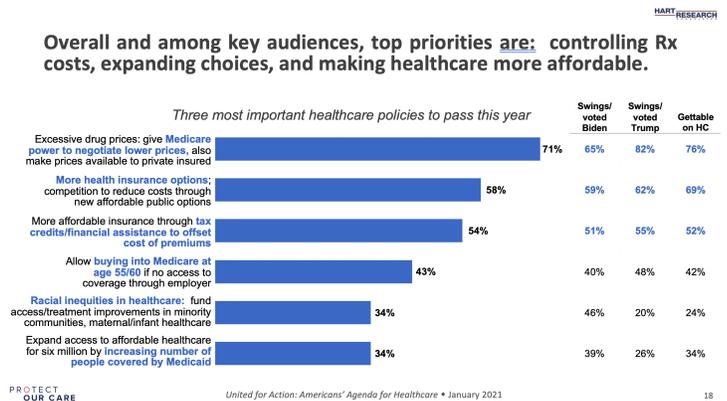
**Twenty Four Percent Of West Virginians Have Forgone Medications To Pay For Essential Items And Bills.** In 2017, [24 percent](#) of West Virginia adults reported that they stopped taking a prescription medication as prescribed because of cost concerns.

**Nearly Three Quarters of West Virginia Residents Are Worried About Prescription Drug Prices.** [Recent polling](#) has shown that 74 percent of West Virginia residents say they are concerned about the cost of their medications.

**Americans Fear That Drug Companies Will Use The Pandemic As An Excuse To Raise Prices.** [Nearly 9 in 10](#) Americans fear that drug companies will use the pandemic as an excuse to raise prices.

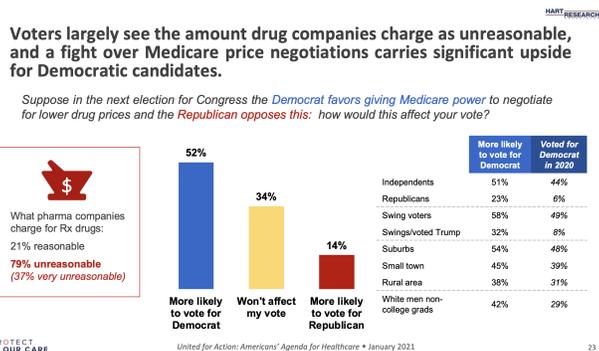
**Medicare Negotiation Is Widely Popular Among Voters**

**Nine In 10 Americans Support Medicaid Negotiation.** Polls consistently show nearly [nine in 10 Americans](#) support allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices. A July 2020 Gallup poll found that [89%](#) support government negotiation to control the cost of COVID-19 treatment. A January 2021 Hart Research [poll](#) on behalf of Protect Our Care found that giving Medicare the power to negotiate is the most important health care policy to pass this year.

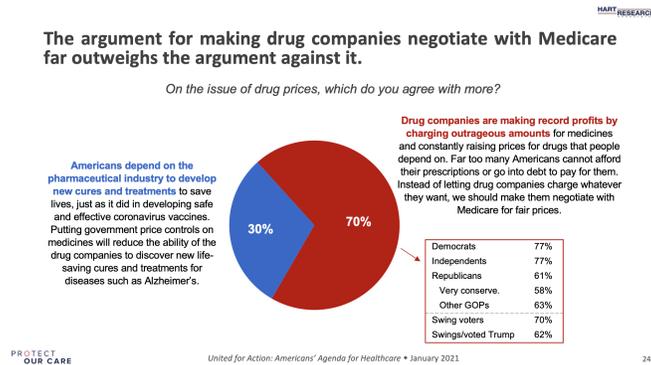


**Medicare Negotiation Is A Winning Issue For Democrats.** The Hart Research [poll](#) also found that nearly 8 in 10 voters (79%) agree that the cost pharmaceutical companies charge for prescription drugs is unreasonable. Voters agreed that the arguments for negotiation -- that drug companies are making record profits by charging outrageous amounts -- far outweigh the arguments against it -- that controlling costs could hurt innovation.

*Respondents overwhelmingly reported that they would be more likely to support a Democratic Congressional candidate that favors Medicare negotiation:*



Even after hearing PhRMA's core innovation argument, only 3-in-10 agree with their position that Medicare negotiation will harm innovation into cures and treatments, while 7-in-10 Americans say they agree with Democrats' side of the argument:



## NO LIMITS: Drug Companies Are Shamelessly Hiking The Cost Of Lifesaving Drugs

For years, drug companies have engaged in the dangerous practice of price-gouging – pursuing massive profits to the detriment of people who need their medication to survive. Among the highest-profile examples of price gouging is the lifesaving diabetes drug, insulin. Developed in 1923, insulin treatments have only experienced moderate improvements in recent years but have seen astronomical price hikes. The cost of the four most popular types of insulin have [tripled](#) over the past decade, with the average price per month rising to \$450 in 2016. Eli Lilly, for example, has [hiked](#) the price of its brand-name insulin, Humalog, 30 times in 20 years, from \$21 per vial in 1998 to nearly \$300 in 2018. As costs continue to rise, as many as one in four of the [7.5 million](#) Americans dependent on insulin are skipping or skimping on doses, which can lead to [death](#).

In West Virginia, between 1991 and 2014, [per capita spending](#) on prescription drugs grew by an average of 6.8 percent per year, from \$304 per capita to \$1,377, faster than all other health care spending.

## Business As Usual: Drug Costs Are Still Rising As The Nation Is Still Reeling From The Pandemic

**Drug Companies Hiked The Prices Of Nearly 1,000 Drugs In January.** Multiple [studies](#) confirm that drug companies hiked the prices of hundreds of drugs in January 2021, as the pandemic surged across the nation. One [analysis](#) from 46brooklyn found that the U.S. saw brand name drug price increases surpass 900 in January 2021, the highest in over a decade. Another [analysis](#) from GoodRX found that more than 800 drugs saw price increases in January – the “largest number of increases in years.”

**Pharma CEOs And Executives Are Cashing In During The Pandemic.** In July 2020, the New York Times reported that senior executives and board members from at least 11 pharmaceutical and medical companies pursuing potential coronavirus treatments and vaccines sold shares worth well over [\\$1 billion](#) since March. Another [report](#) from Accountable Pharma found that executives at five major pharmaceutical companies that received taxpayer funding for vaccines made \$145 million in stock sales between May and August of 2020. Reporting from Axios confirmed top executives reaped massive profits during the pandemic. Per Axios, “Dave Ricks of Eli Lilly made [\\$68 million](#) (twice as much as 2019), and \$58 million of that came from stock.”

**Drug Companies Experience The Highest Profits Among Any Major Industry.** Between 2000 and 2018, 35 large drug companies raked in a combined revenue of [\\$11.5 trillion](#) with a gross profit of \$8.6 trillion – far more than

other large companies. Researchers from West Health Policy Center and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health have found that drug companies could lose [\\$1 trillion](#) in sales and still be the most profitable industry.

**Americans Are Already Paying More For Drugs Than Any Other Country In The World.** At \$1,229 per capita, people in the U.S. [spend more](#) on pharmaceuticals per capita than do people in any other country in the world. A recent report by the RAND Corporation shows that U.S. drug prices are 256% higher than 32 other countries.

## **Medicare Negotiation Would Bring Down Drug Prices While Saving West Virginia Taxpayers Billions**

**Democrats' Drug Pricing Proposal Would Save Taxpayers Nearly \$500 Billion Over The Next 10 Years.**

Analyses from the nonpartisan [Congressional Budget Office](#) and the [CMS Office of the Actuary](#) the bill confirmed it would reduce negotiated drug prices by as much as 55%— saving patients an estimated \$158 billion over the next few years and decreasing deficits by \$456 billion.

**H.R. 3 Could Save Patients Thousands Of Dollars On Costly Medications.** The Center for American Progress [calculated](#) average savings for several drugs that would likely meet the criteria for negotiation under [H.R. 3](#). In addition to achieving thousands of dollars in monthly savings on expensive treatments for conditions like cancer and multiple sclerosis, H.R. 3 would help lower the cost of insulin for some diabetics by more than \$700 annually.