

Wisconsin Legislature Has Part In Drug Corporation EpiPen Price Gouge

Written by Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Robert Kraig
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<http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/scott-fitzgeraldl-stands-behind-walker-s5.jpg>



Mylan spent thousands on political contributions, tens of thousands on lobbying to use Wisconsin school and recreation programs to expand market for EpiPens

STATEWIDE - Prescription drug corporation Mylan, the seller of EpiPen and the source of escalating controversy nationally and [in Wisconsin](#) for price gouging for a medication that can make a life and death difference for people suffering from an allergic reaction, has given thousands in political contributions to GOP State Legislators in Wisconsin and spent tens of thousands on lobbying to influence the Legislature to help it increase its market in Wisconsin. The Legislation is helping Mylan build the monopoly it needs to overcharge for the medication.

Since 2014, Mylan's corporate PAC has [made thousands of dollars in contributions](#) in Wisconsin exclusively to Republican state legislators, focusing on those who serve on the Senate Health Committee, according to data compiled by the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign.

Mylan also [spent \\$42,000](#) between 2013-2014, and [\\$24,500 between 2015-2016](#) lobbying in Wisconsin on issues "...affecting the manufacture, distribution, or sale of prescription drugs and medical devices" as well as on what became [2013 Wisconsin Act 239](#) and [2015 Wisconsin Act 35](#) and broadly on "anything relating to generic pharmaceuticals."

These two Wisconsin laws have expanded the scope of users of EpiPens to "recreational and educational camp, college, university, day care facility, youth sports league, amusement park, restaurant, place of employment, and sports arena" as well as "public, private, or tribal schools". Together this expansion is projected to [cost the state \\$77,500 per year](#) for the state to administer.

In return for its political donations and lobbying, Mylan has successfully induced state legislators

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into participating in its marketing scheme to ring windfall profits out of Wisconsin families seeking protection from severe allergic reactions. As has been reported by [Wisconsin Public Radio](#), Mylan has used state legislation to expand the EpiPen market in order to position itself to reap a cash windfall from raising prices. With no justification other than profit, Mylan has increased the price of EpiPens by 5 fold since 2007, to the current price of \$633 for a two pack.

“It is hard to imagine much worse than a family priced out of a medication that could save their child’s life because of the greed of a drug corporation. Mylan is engaging in grossly unethical business practices with the assistance of state legislators. Under current Wisconsin law, drug corporations like Mylan have the unlimited ability to charge unjustified prices for life saving medication,” said Robert Kraig, Executive Director of Citizen Action of Wisconsin. “What Mylan is doing is like selling food or water at a grossly inflated price during a natural disaster. Wisconsin families are trying to pay the inflated price because of the potential life-saving value of the drug.”

Transparency and oversight are vital if we are to guarantee access to quality affordable prescriptions for consumers. The Legislature is supposed to protect the interests of Wisconsin families, not drug corporations. As a start, the Wisconsin Legislature should stop promoting the expansion of the EpiPen market, and take up Rep. [Debra Kolste's legislation](#) on prescription drug transparency, which would force Mylan to justify the price of its medications.