



**Massachusetts
Prescription Reform
Coalition**

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AIDS Action Committee

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Community Partners

Health Care For All

Massachusetts Senior
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MASSPIRG

National Physicians Alliance

Neighborhood Health Plan

The Prescription Project

United Auto Workers
Massachusetts CAP
Council

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**THE MASSACHUSETTS PRESCRIPTION REFORM COALITION
PRAISES SENATE PRESIDENT MURRAY FOR TAKING ON
PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS**

BOSTON, MA – March 3, 2008 – The Massachusetts Prescription Reform Coalition applauds Senate President Murray for including provisions aimed at reining in excessive prescription drug prices in the cost control legislation that she introduced today. The legislation includes a ban on gifts from pharmaceutical companies to prescribers and proposes an evidence-based physician education program (often referred to as “academic detailing”).

Between 2000 and 2006, prices of the most commonly prescribed brand name drugs grew by over 50 percent, more than double the inflation rate. This increase has been driven by excessive and, until now, unchecked marketing practices, including the industry’s practice of giving of gifts and other financial incentives to physicians. Prescription drug companies spent over \$7 billion marketing its drugs to physicians in 2005 alone, including providing gifts, meals and other financial incentives. Studies show that gifts inherently influence prescribing decisions.

Pharmaceutical gifts undermine quality of care and unnecessarily increase prescribing of the most expensive drugs. The cost of the gifts that pharmaceutical companies give physicians are passed on to consumers, employers, and the state in inflated prescription drug prices – prices that threaten access to needed medications and strain individuals’ and the Commonwealth’s budgets.

An evidence-based physician education program would provide doctors with unbiased information to guide them in their prescribing decisions. Such programs have the potential to more pay for themselves with savings to public programs.

By taking a stand against gifts to prescribers and promoting evidence-based prescribing, the Commonwealth will ensure that everyone has access to the right drug at the right price.