

## Murphy Questions Sky-High Price of Pre-Natal Medication

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) called on Ther-Rx Corporation, the maker of a drug compound called Makena used to prevent premature pregnancy, to further reduce the price of the medication. Prior to Ther-Rx Corporation getting the federal Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) approval to make the drug, it was available via a combination of drugs at local pharmacies for just \$15 a dose. Then Ther-Rx Corporation initially priced the drug at \$1,500 a dose. Today, it announced a price drop to \$690 a dose.

"I wish this was an April Fools' joke, but it's not. This drug company thought it was okay to charge people a hundred times what they had been paying for this medication. And today's news that it will be available for the bargain price of \$690 is insulting to the women who rely on this drug for their own health and the health of their child," said Murphy.

Prior to the FDA's approval of Makena, many women at risk of premature birth were given a generic version of the drug that was manufactured at local pharmacies. However, early this year the FDA approved Makena, giving Ther-Rx a monopoly over the industry. In light of the steep price increases, the cost of treatment will likely be prohibitively expensive and ultimately lead to an increase in premature births. According to the Center for Disease Control, premature birth is the leading cause of death among newborn babies, and premature babies face increased risks of lifelong disabilities such as poor vision, cerebral palsy, and autism.

This week, Murphy joined several Members of Congress in expressing his concern over the corporation's decision to drastically increase the price of Makena. In a letter to Ther-Rx Corporation, the subsidiary of KV Pharmaceutical responsible for selling Makena, Murphy stated his dismay with the planned 100-fold price increase of Makena, and criticized the drug maker for making pre-natal health less affordable for Americans. Right now, more than 500,000 women give birth prematurely each year. Murphy and other Members of Congress also articulated the various health risks associated with pre-mature births, and acknowledged that taxpayers would shoulder the brunt of increased prices resulting from higher healthcare costs. Finally, Murphy asked Ther-Rx to drastically reduce the cost of Makena, and make the drug more available to pregnant women.

"With the dramatic price increase for this drug, thousands of women will be forced to forgo treatment and accept an increased risk of premature birth. This is outrageous, and we can't sit idly while a pharmaceutical company makes lifesaving medicine unaffordable to thousands of Americans," said Murphy.

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