



RunawayRx, a project of the California Association of Health Plans, highlights noteworthy articles and information on the acceleration of prescription drug pricing.

While price spikes for EpiPens have caused an uproar over the past couple of weeks, as this round up of recent news coverage shows, EpiPens are not an outlier and the public and policymakers are reaching a breaking point.

[The Lesson of EpiPens: Why Drug Prices Spike, Again and Again](#)

By Elisabeth Rosenthal | September 2, 2016

The New York Times

“Mylan has tried to calm the waters by offering many patients \$300 coupons to cover increased co-payments. **But that is a Band-Aid — and a deceptive, high-priced one at that:** While we consumers may be insulated from the charge at the pharmacy counter, our insurers are paying the increased rates, leading to premium rises next year. And our schools buy EpiPens with our tax dollars. Mylan’s intention to make a generic EpiPen, though it will help some patients, is likewise a calculated maneuver. If Mylan is prepared to offer a \$300 generic injector, made in the same factories with the same components, why doesn’t it just sell the EpiPen for the lower price? The answer is all business and no medicine...”

[Here's why drug prices rise even when there's plenty of competition](#)

By Melody Petersen | September 3, 2016

Los Angeles Times

“According to the federal Health and Human Services Department, prescription drugs now account for almost 17% of personal healthcare expenditures – up from about 7% in the 1990s...”

“Brand-name medicines are protected from competition by their patents, and they are still the primary driver of rising drug spending. When the patents expire, other companies can sell the medicines as generics, which in the past has usually caused the price to plummet...”

“‘These are old drugs,’ said Frankil, the pharmacist. ‘These aren’t drugs that are hard to make.’”

“[T]oday the price of an increasing number of generic drugs with multiple manufacturers is rising.

...[E]ight of the 10 drugs that had the biggest percentage price hikes in 2014 were generic medicines made by multiple manufacturers...”

[How much is too much to spend for life-saving medicines?](#)

By Courtney Perkes | September 6, 2016

THE ORANGE COUNTY
REGISTER

“Rising drug prices, particularly those of specialty drugs to treat cancer or hepatitis C, have been blamed for everything from a double-digit premium hike for California’s 2017 Obamacare policies to straining the state’s Medi-Cal budget for low-income residents.

“‘It speaks to the frustration of not only patients but physicians’ frustration with health care,’ said Dr. Sarah Field, an allergist at Children’s Hospital of Orange County. ‘It reduces our capacity to empower patients with medications that we feel are the right medications...’

“**...[T]he state Legislature approved a resolution urging Congress to take action against Mylan** and asking the Food and Drug Administration to reconsider denial of a competing generic alternative. In response to public pressure, Mylan announced last week that it would begin selling a generic EpiPen for half the price, \$300 for a pack of two.”

For more information on California Association of Health Plans’ RunawayRx project please visit RunawayRx.org or [@Runaway_Rx](https://twitter.com/Runaway_Rx).