

MEA-Retired Tribune

April 2017

Pharmaceutical Corporations Spent \$5.6 Billion on Ads to Consumers in 2016

Pharmaceutical corporations boosted their spending on advertising and promotion by 9% last year, bringing the total to \$5.6 billion, according to a recent study by a drug industry publication. Combined, the industry plans to spend over 5.6 billion dollars this year to promote their drugs directly to consumers rather than doctors.

Pfizer and Bristol-Myers Squibb spent the most on advertising, spending \$1.1 billion and \$458 million, respectively, on direct to consumer ads on television, billboards, magazines, newspapers and radio. The increased advertising comes as prescription prices continue to rise and pharmaceutical companies seek to increase volume.

Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** called for pharmaceutical corporations to stop chasing profits and focus on patients. “Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. Maybe if they didn’t spend billions on ads, they could make their products affordable for working people. Congress needs to take action to lower drug prices, by allowing consumers to purchase drugs safely from other countries and allowing Medicare to negotiate prices on behalf of consumers and taxpayers. Drug companies should spend less on advertising and cease putting profits above people.”

The United States and New Zealand are the only countries that allow pharmaceutical corporations to advertise drugs directly to consumers. The American Medical Association and consumer advocates argue that these advertisements can lead to people seeking medication that they do not need.

VOUCHERS by Brian Washington

Education Secretary Betsy DeVos told state leaders last week at a legislative conference in Washington, D.C. that the Trump-DeVos education budget, which includes \$250 million for failed ideas like private school vouchers, is designed to “enhance” school choice legislation at the state level.

However, as voucher proponents begin to salivate in anticipation of all the federal funding they think they’ll get, they need to beware. Parents, educators, and lawmakers who support public schools are banding together on behalf of public school students.

Parents and educators, in their opposition to vouchers, also cite the lack of accountability when it comes to student performance and making sure the rights of our most vulnerable kids, students with disabilities, are protected.

But those interested in funneling public tax dollars into voucher schemes with little or no accountability for how the money is spent are not deterred. New voucher bills have reportedly been introduced in Arizona, New Hampshire, Missouri, Texas and about six other states. And with the Trump-DeVos budget promising millions nationwide, expect to see more states with school choice plans offering students and families a false choice through private school vouchers.

Bill Alert

HB 4301

The House Oversight Committee voted 4-2 to move HB 4301 to the House floor. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Brandt Ide (R-Oshtemo Twp.), requires the Department of Technology, Management, and Budget (DTMB) to post the name, title, civil service classification, salary and benefit information of all state employees on the state website.

HB 400

This bill would eliminate the Michigan Income Tax over 40 years. The bill came up for a vote, but was defeated 52-55. Whether it will come up again is unknown at this time, but the odds for that happening are not good.

HB 4398

New legislation that would change required 90-60 days for substitute teaching in K-8 grades (limited to 60 day).

Results of the MEA-Retired Election

MEA RA Delegates

Penny Letts Region 11
Jack Schneider Region 7
James Pearson Region 7
Elias Chapa Region 3
Robert Letts Region 11
Harvey Miller Region 15
Judy Gail Armstrong-Hall Region 7
Connie Boylan Region 15
Randolph Stone Region 7
Katherine Walker-Telma Region 15
Barbara Schram Region 8
Linda Russell Region 6

NEA RA Delegates

Sheila Blain Region 7
Al Beamish Region 16
Jack Schneider Region 7
Geoffrey Blain Region 6
Anne Good Region 5
Randolph Stone Region 7
Katherine Walker-Telma Region 15
Linda Russell Region 6
Connie Boylan Region 15
Stephen Franko Region 11
Barbara Schram Region 8
John Frederick Region 10
Millie Lambert Region 5

Calendar

April 4, 2017 – MEA-Retired Annual Meeting

April 21-22, 2017 – MEA RA

May 20, 2017 – MEA PAC Annual Meeting

August 2, 2017 – Meeting for Chapter Presidents at Summer Leadership