

As the costs of prescription drugs continue to rise, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today joined leaders and doctors at OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois to discuss new efforts to hold pharmaceutical companies accountable and lower prices for consumers.

"We need to come together both political parties and say to our pharmaceutical industry enough is enough," urged Senator Durbin. "When you are asked to control prices and keep them reasonable in Canada and in Europe do it in the United States as well. When you are advertising on television tell consumers what the actual cost will be of the drug you are advertising. When you are reaching out to doctors and dentists and licensed practical nurses and others - nurse practitioners - and telling them this is what you should prescribe, we ought to know what incentives you are creating. There are limits that ought to be drawn."

Durbin has introduced legislation to require disclosure of prices in prescription drug advertising to consumers and has co-sponsored a bipartisan bill, approved yesterday in the Senate Judiciary Committee, to combat abusive delay tactics used by brand-name drug companies to block entry of affordable generic drugs.

"Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois tells me the number one driver in premium costs for health-insurance is the cost of prescription drugs. It's an issue that has to be tackled in Washington and on a national basis and we need to do it to make sure that the drug companies are held accountable," said Senator Durbin.

Dr. Steve Hippler, OSF HealthCare Chief Clinical Officer, says high prescription costs can impede the health of patients. They can't get better if they can't afford their medications.

"A recent study suggested that 30 to 40% of patients go to the pharmacy to pick up their medicine yet can't afford it and don't take it," he said. "Up to 10% of ED admissions - ED visits and admissions - are related to patients not taking their medicine correctly and this impacts patients and families each and every day."

Senator Durbin says he looks forward to working with members of the medical community to accomplish the work that needs to be done to help lower the cost of prescription medications.