

# After harsh light, a cheaper version of EpiPen from Mylan

December 16 2016, by Tom Murphy

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In this July 8, 2016, file photo, a pharmacist holds a package of EpiPens epinephrine auto-injector, a Mylan product, in Sacramento, Calif. Mylan has started selling a generic version of its emergency allergy treatment EpiPen at half the price of the branded option, the cost of which drew national scorn and attracted Congressional inquiries. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File)

Mylan is releasing a generic version of its emergency allergy treatment

EpiPen at half the price of the branded option, the cost of which drew scorn from parents nationwide and spawned Congressional inquiries.

The potential cost savings will depend in part on a patient's insurance coverage and qualifications for discount and assistance programs that the drugmaker also provides.

For Mylan, the benefit from its long-promised generic is more certain: It is expected to generate millions of dollars in revenue while also protecting the drugmaker's market share against competition.

Mylan NV said Friday that it will charge \$300 for the generic version of its life-saving injections, which come in a two pack. The generic version will begin to reach retail pharmacies next week.

The list price of an EpiPen two-pack, which is stocked by schools and parents of children with severe allergies, now tops \$600, an increase of more than 500 percent since 2007, when Mylan bought rights to the drug.

EpiPens are used in emergencies to stop anaphylaxis, the potentially fatal allergic reactions to insect bites and stings and foods like nuts and eggs. People usually keep multiple EpiPens handy at home, school or work. But the syringes, prefilled with the hormone epinephrine, expire after a year.

Criticism of the branded drug's list price started snowballing last summer when parents doing back-to-school shopping encountered sticker shock at the pharmacy counter and began protesting to politicians and on social media.

In September, a Congressional panel grilled Mylan CEO Healthier Bresch about the soaring cost, which she has blamed in part on insurers,

pharmacy benefits managers and other middlemen that stand between the drugmaker and the customer.

Mylan has expanded the financial aid it offers to EpiPen customers since the pricing criticism grew, but it hasn't budged on the drug's price. It said in August that it was doubling the limit for eligibility for its patient assistance program, so a family of four making up to \$97,200 would pay nothing out of pocket for EpiPens.

A company spokeswoman confirmed Friday that the assistance also will apply to the generic version.

Mylan also offers \$300 copay cards for the brand-name version, to help customers with high out-of-pocket expenses. It's also providing a \$25 discount for customers buying the generic version

But uninsured patients and those on the government-funded Medicaid and Medicare programs don't qualify.

Critics have dismissed these discounts and assistance programs. They say many customers won't use or qualify for them, and they argue that these programs have little impact on the bill that employer or insurers pay, which can affect the price of health insurance.

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