



Congressional Committees Shaping Prescription Drug Policy

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS RANK AMONG AMERICANS' TOP CONCERNS, WITH FOUR OUT OF FIVE SAYING PRICES ARE TOO HIGH.

Congress has the power to act, but with 46 committees across the House and Senate, knowing which panels hold that power isn't always obvious.

This guide breaks down the committees best positioned to make a difference.

[Explore West Health's broader work on prescription drug affordability and access.](#)



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Senate



Health, Education, Labor, and Pension (HELP)

Oversees biomedical research and regulatory review, with jurisdiction over the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, and the 340B program. Also oversees private insurance markets and pharmacy benefit managers through jurisdiction of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act and the Affordable Care Act.



Finance

Oversees Medicare (including Parts B and D, cost-sharing, and drug price negotiations), Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act. Also holds jurisdiction over trade and tax policy, making it central to pharmaceutical business issues such as corporate taxation, research and development tax credits, and tariffs.



Judiciary

Oversees antitrust enforcement, competition policy, and intellectual property, with jurisdiction extending to pharmacy benefit manager consolidation and patent strategies that manufacturers use to limit competition. Oversees key agencies including the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Justice Department's Antitrust Division.



Select Committee on Aging

Established to study issues affecting older adults, the committee conducts oversight, holds hearings, and issues reports, but holds no formal legislative jurisdiction. Drug affordability is a central focus given that roughly 90 percent of the nation's 60 million adults over age 65 use prescription drugs.

House of Representatives



Ways & Means

Holds sole jurisdiction over Medicare Part A and shares jurisdiction over Parts B, C, and D with Energy & Commerce. Oversees Medicare issues including drug price negotiations, international reference pricing, and cost-sharing. Considers all tax legislation affecting the pharmaceutical industry.



Energy & Commerce

Oversees health insurance markets, biomedical research, drug review, antitrust enforcement, and Medicaid, along with Medicare Parts B, C, and D in coordination with Ways & Means. Oversees key agencies including the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Federal Trade Commission, and has recently scrutinized pharmacy benefit manager practices.



Judiciary

Oversees drug pricing issues through jurisdiction of market consolidation, patent policy, and anti-competitive behavior, mirroring the scope of its Senate counterpart. Has examined pharmacy benefit manager practices and oversees the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and the Justice Department's Antitrust Division.



Education & Workforce

Oversees the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, with jurisdiction extending to prescription drug coverage, pharmacy benefit manager contracting, formulary design, cost-sharing, and benefit design.



Oversight & Government Reform

Oversees a broad portfolio that has examined pharmacy benefit managers, Medicare Part D, drug company pricing practices, and the Food and Drug Administration. Also oversees the Federal Employees Health Benefits program.