



The Sacramento Bee's [Editorial Board](#) kicked off 2017 declaring the important need for public policy action to reign in out-of-control drug costs, noting Senator Ed Hernandez's Senate Bill 17 is a promising first step that shines a light on drug pricing practices and brings much-needed transparency to this one segment that's been operating in a black box.

GOP SHOULD FOCUS ON DRUG COSTS, NOT OBAMACARE REPEAL

By Editorial Board | January 2, 2017

THE SACRAMENTO BEE 

"Instead of attacking a program that has worked to provide coverage to 20 million previously uninsured Americans, **Congress should turn its attention to what drives up the cost of health care. One place to start is with the high cost of drugs...**

"Many drugs extend lives and relieve suffering. But too many drugmakers are focused on shareholders and profits. To generate sales, nine drugmakers spent \$100 million or more each on ads in 2016 to persuade the public of the need for various pills, [the nonpartisan health news website Stat reports](#). Altogether, Stat reports, there were 1.3 million ads aired on national television in 2016, at a multibillion-dollar cost that consumers ultimately shoulder...

"Drug companies are exploiting lax laws and regulations that enable exorbitant prices..."

– Tom Epstein, Retired Blue Shield Insurance Executive

"In 2016, Californians witnessed the prowess of drug company lobbyists and consultants. Pharmaceutical companies spent at least \$105 million, and perhaps \$125 million, to defeat Proposition 61, a complicated and [flawed initiative that had promised to reduce drug prices](#).

"Earlier in the year, drug company lobbyists derailed legislation to [increase drug price transparency](#). But drug companies should not take their victories as votes of confidence. **Senate Health Committee Chairman Ed Hernandez, D-West Covina, will be back at it with a similar bill in 2017, having introduced Senate Bill 17. And voters could be more amenable to a targeted, less complicated initiative in 2018.**"

Read More: <http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/editorials/article124195054.html>

The California Association of Health Plans' RunawayRx project sheds light on the acceleration of prescription drug pricing and how it impacts health care affordability, encouraging a route toward sustainable pricing. For more information, please visit www.RunawayRx.org or follow us on Twitter at [@Runaway Rx](#).