



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

New Klein Bill Would Slash Prescription Drug Prices For Thousands

JEFFREY D. KLEIN April 21, 2005



NY – Thousands of seniors in the Bronx and Westchester would see their prescription drug prices fall 80 percent under a new bill introduced in the legislature this past week by State Senator Jeff Klein. Klein's bill would allow more seniors to participate in New York's Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Program, or EPIC, by increasing the income ceiling for the program.

"Seniors shouldn't have to spend their golden years worrying if they'll be able to afford drugs

they need to keep them healthy,” said Klein. “Those with modest incomes who have worked all their lives ought to also receive some assistance also.”

Under current law, EPIC provides assistance to 350,000 seniors statewide. Individuals earning less than \$35,000 a year and married couples earning less than \$50,000 are eligible for the program. Klein seeks to expand the program so that individual seniors earning to \$50,000 and married couples with incomes to \$75,000 could enroll in EPIC.

“We all know too well that prescription drug prices are an increasing burden, particularly for seniors. My bill will lessen the financial pain by expanding EPIC, immediately lowering the prices for more than 22,000 seniors statewide by, on average, 80 percent,” said Klein. “The costs of this expansion would be minimal, less than one-tenth of one percent of the state budget, and covered by better than anticipated revenues from cigarette taxes.”

Klein’s bill, S. 2809, received rousing support from local officials, senior center and advocacy group leaders, and individual citizens, many of whom joined him at the press conference announcing his bill. Among those present were Republican County Legislator Bernice Spreckman, Pelham Trustee Ciro Greco, Pelham Manor Trustee Steve Flanders, and Reva Greenberg, President of VOCAL (Voices of Community Action Leadership).

Senator Klein has been a long time advocate for reducing prescription drug prices. In January, he released a report documenting the wildly erratic prices of asthma drugs from pharmacy to pharmacy in New York City.
