

State

Interest group says state Medicaid could save over \$2 million

House bill would give consumers more choice of generic drugs

United Press International
AUSTIN — Texas consumers will be able to save \$25 million to \$30 million a year if the Legislature passes a bill allowing pharmacists to substitute generic drugs for brand names, a statewide community organization announced Tuesday.

Representatives of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, a group of about 7,000 low and moderate-income families, said at a Capitol news conference that passage of a drug product selection act would give the consumer and patient a choice between a generic drug and a brand name prescription.

ACORN member Margat Beutler said, through selective shopping, consumers could use the same cost-saving consumer techniques when purchasing prescription drugs as they do when buying such items as dog food.

Current Texas law only allows the doctor to say how much a patient will spend for a prescription drug, Beutler said. "Under the current habits of most physicians much less generic pricing goes on than could be allowable."

ACORN's proposed legislation, sponsored by Sen. Chet Brooks, D-Pasadena; Sen. Kent Caperton, D-Bryan; and Rep. Ted Lyons, D-Mesquite, would allow pharmacists "to suggest to the patient how he can save money," Beutler said.

"The major impact of this bill is to allow on a broader scale what pharmacists already do," she said. ACORN had pushed a similar bill during the last session, but it failed to pass in the Senate.

Beutler said she believes the proposed legislation has a better chance of passing this time, because of the more conservative composition of the Legislature. "They're just as interested in cost-saving as everyone else is. It's a good bill and people need it," she said.

UH teachers hold sickout, demand raise

United Press International
HOUSTON — Teachers at the University of Houston Tuesday met with school administrators to negotiate for higher wages, threatening to continue their two-day-old sickout if demands were not met.

Christine Domino, spokeswoman for the teaching assistants involved in the sickout, said her group "is encouraged by signs of recovery."

"We have appointed a negotiator to represent us with the administration. We can't go on being paid so little," Domino said. She is a leader of the Teaching Assistants, Teaching Fellows and Lecturers Salary Association whose members have been calling in sick this week and caused the cancellation of classes Monday.

On Monday, the first day of the sickout, 75 teachers in the English department called in sick. On Tuesday, Domino said most teaching assistants from the English, French and German departments called in ill, and she was not sure of the status of the physical education department teachers. However, faculty shifts avoided the cancellation of any classes.

Teaching assistants, who make between \$350 and \$550 a month, want the starting salary for their category to be raised to \$850 a month, Domino said.

Wendy Adair, spokeswoman for the university, said the school's administration is sympathetic to the teaching assistant's cause, "but everyone at the university is under-

paid." "We were not aware of the sickout until Monday. They (teachers) got their point across," Adair said.

Domino said the Legislature ordered for teachers a 5.1 salary increase, but school officials have disregarded that act. However, UH provost officer George Magner said 80 percent of the eligible teachers received the increase in 1980.

He called the sickout a "symbolic gesture" by the teachers, but didn't think it would last more than a day. The university presently employs about 1,400 teaching assistants who handle the lecture portion of a class. Only about 62 eligible teachers had been passed over, Adair said.

Nancy Ford, who teaches English composition while working on her master's degree, said teachers are not only concerned about their own personal finances and careers, but also the quality of education.

"The better qualified teaching fellows (on fellowships) and lecturers have to leave the University of Houston because they can't afford to work any longer. We lost 15 teaching fellows this semester alone — 12 because of finances," Ford said.

UH Chancellor Barry Munitz said if the budget board has made a mistake by not granting the teachers raises, the school will correct that error. He said the budget board will reinterpret the Legislature's order and decide by Thursday if the teachers are entitled to more money.

Tenneco has 27 percent profit record

United Press International
HOUSTON — Tenneco Inc., crediting improved performance in its energy and shipbuilding divisions, Tuesday reported record net income of \$726 million for 1980, a 27 percent increase over the previous record \$571 million in 1979.

James L. Kettelsen, chairman and chief executive officer, said operating revenues totaled \$13.2 billion. Revenues in 1979 were \$11.2 billion. Return on stockholders equity was 15 percent, compared to 17.4 percent in 1979.

Tenneco also reported fourth quarter net income up 22 percent, from \$164 million in 1979 to \$200 million in 1980. Operating revenues during the fourth quarter were \$3.6 billion compared to \$3.3 billion in fourth quarter 1979.

Tenneco markets oil and gas under its own name. Newport News Shipbuilding is one of its subsidiaries.

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