

PRESS RELEASE

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SAFE RX SENT TO FULL COUNCIL

MEASURE WILL PROTECT DISTRICT RESIDENTS FROM UNETHICAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG MARKETING TACTICS

Washington, D.C. – Today, the D.C. Council’s Committee of the Whole placed the “SafeRx Act of 2007” on the agenda of the Council’s next Legislative Meeting on December 11, 2007. The measure will protect District of Columbia residents from several potentially harmful prescription drug marketing practices. Among other things, the legislation will require the licensure of pharmaceutical representatives and prohibit them from providing knowingly false information to physicians.

“I look forward to bringing this important legislation to a vote,” said Catania. “I expect that the pharmaceutical industry will lobby my colleagues intensely over the next couple weeks. However, I am confident that the Council will put the health and safety of our residents before the profits of pharmaceutical companies.”

Pharmaceutical representatives, called “detailers,” account for a large share of the marketing costs of prescription drugs. Some estimate that there are currently 100,000 detailers peddling drugs today. Detailers have been known to resort to questionable methods, including providing gifts and meals to doctors, in order promote their drugs. This has the potential to influence doctors’ prescribing decisions in ways that have little to do with the best interest of the patient. *SafeRx* will require detailers doing business in the District to be licensed and held to a professional code of conduct. Those who violate these standards will be fined and could have their license revoked. The bill will also require detailers to have an appropriate educational background.

“Detailers have come to play a huge role in our healthcare system, and it is time to start treating them as the healthcare providers,” said Catania. “Placing them under the purview of the Board of Pharmacy is a completely sensible way to police drug salesman in the District.”

In addition to regulating detailers, *SafeRx* prohibits the use of private prescription data for marketing purposes without the prior consent of a physician. The bill also creates an academic detailing program to educate doctors on the latest developments in pharmaceutical research. Finally, the bill prohibits members of the District’s Medical Advisory Committees from receiving gifts from pharmaceutical companies.

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