

PRESS RELEASE

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CATANIA BILL TARGETS UNSAFE PRESCRIPTION DRUG MARKETING

SAYS PRESCRIPTIONS SHOULD BE BASED ON SCIENCE, NOT PROFIT

Washington, D.C. – Today, Councilmember David Catania (At-Large) introduced the “Safe Rx Act of 2007” to protect District of Columbia residents from several potentially harmful prescription drug marketing practices. These include the licensing of pharmaceutical representatives, requiring the disclosure of clinical trials, and ending the controversial practice of data mining for commercial purposes.

“The provisions of *SafeRx* are completely sensible and will improve the safety of the prescribing process,” said Catania. “The current system encourages a high-degree of drug switching to more expensive medicines. I believe that prescribing decisions should be based on science rather than profit.”

Pharmaceutical representatives, called “detailers,” account for the majority 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 to 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 that they are,” said Catania. “I have seen reports that the drug companies actively recruit jocks and cheerleaders to sell their drugs because they know how influential they are on doctors’ prescribing decisions. That is the very definition of a system run amok.”

In addition to regulating detailers, *SafeRx* prohibits the practice of data mining, or studying a doctor’s prescribing patterns for the purpose of switching him or her to an alternative, usually more expensive drug. The bill also creates an academic detailing program to educate doctors on the latest developments in pharmaceutical research and requires informed consent when prescribing for a non-FDA approved use. Finally, the legislation requires drug companies to disclose all clinical trials on the District Government’s website and prohibits members of Medical Advisory Committees from receiving gifts from pharmaceutical companies.

For more information on pharmaceutical detailers, [Click Here](#).