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A Simple Truth: Prescription Drug Costs Are Too High

The Conference of Blue Cross and Blue Shields Plans (NYSCOP) today released an infographic titled, "[**A Simple Truth: Prescription Drug Costs Are Too High**](#)," shining a light on the billions of advertising dollars being spent by pharmaceutical companies to peddle name-brand drugs, which ultimately increases the cost of health care for everyone.

According to the NYSCOP infographic, last year, pharmaceutical companies spent \$4.5 billion to advertise their products. From 2010 through 2014, total spending on direct-to-consumer advertising reached \$19.5 billion.

"Everyone is familiar with the ads of couples strolling on the beach looking at the sunset or of an individual regretting the spicy food he or she ate at a party that are broadcast during the nightly news or during high profile events such as the Super Bowl or the Olympics," said Deborah Fasser, NYSCOP. "Now we know how much the pharmaceutical companies are spending on these ads and why prescription drug costs keep going up for the consumer."

To gain a better understanding of the scope and magnitude of the money currently being spent by pharmaceutical companies on advertising, the following is a list of what else you could purchase with \$4.5 billion:

- More than two dozen F-35 Fighter Jets, the most sophisticated military airplane in production;
- A new Tappan Zee Bridge, it is three miles in length and the longest bridge in the New York ; and
- The New York Yankees (valued at \$3.2 billion) and Mets (valued at \$1.3 billion) professional baseball teams.

In 2015, pharmaceutical companies were one of the biggest spenders in consumer advertising, along with the automotive industry, cell phone companies, fast food, and life/auto insurance industries.

In response, the American Medical Association (AMA) recently adopted a new policy, calling for a ban on direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription medications. The new AMA policy reflects "concerns among physicians about the negative impact of direct marketing to consumers by pharmaceutical companies, and the role that marketing costs play in fueling escalating drug prices."

The New York State Conference of Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans (NYSCOP) is a partnership of Rochester-based Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield and New York City-based Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield. Together, the two health insurance plans provide comprehensive health coverage for millions of New Yorkers and are dedicated to educating the public through in-depth research and analysis of the cost, access and quality of health care.