

Stricter Control on Painkillers Fail Due to Lobbying by Pharmacists and Drug Chains



Pharmacist groups and drug chains have successfully lobbied against stricter controls on prescription painkillers, The New York Times reports. The proposed controls would have applied to hydrocodone products.

New restrictions on the drugs were approved by the Senate in May, as part of a bill that reauthorized user fees for the Food and Drug Administration. The House version of the bill does not address the issue of controls on prescription drugs, according to the article.

Negotiators for the House and Senate said Monday they had reached an agreement on the bill, and were hopeful Congress would approve it by the end of June. The proposed controls would require patients to receive new prescriptions for refills of products that contain hydrocodone, such as Vicodin. A higher level of security for storage and transportation of these drugs would be required, and penalties for misuse of the drugs would be increased.

Senator Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, who led the fight for stricter controls, told the newspaper his proposal was successfully opposed by drugstores and pharmacists. "We don't want to put anybody out of business," he said. "But perhaps the chain pharmacies and druggists need to change their business model a bit. These are legal drugs needed by some people. But they can also be addictive. They are so readily accessible, so easy to obtain, that they are ravaging society and ending many young lives."

Emergency room visits related to hydrocodone have soared since 2000. Vicodin, which also contains acetaminophen, is subject to fewer regulations than pure hydrocodone.

Drug chains and pharmacist groups objected to the proposed controls, arguing they would make it more difficult for some people suffering from pain to receive treatment. They also said the new controls would lead to costly administrative tasks for pharmacies.

To learn more about prescription drugs, please [click here](#).