

**For Immediate Release**

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**Statewide Nonprofit Issues First Independent Analysis of Prescription Drug Measures**  
*Comparison highlights similarities between competing initiatives*

*Oakland, CA*— In the first independent, in-depth comparison of two prescription drug initiatives on California’s November ballot, a new report from the Public Health Institute explores the provisions and implications of each proposition, revealing an unexpected number of similarities between the otherwise highly contested measures.

“Supporters of both measures have focused almost exclusively on differences between the two proposed programs,” says Kathryn Duke, the report’s author and director of Medicine for People in Need, a program of the Public Health Institute. “In developing a side-by-side comparison, we were surprised to realize how many provisions they actually share.”

Both measures—Proposition 78 (Cal Rx), sponsored by Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), and Proposition 79 (Cal Rx Plus), sponsored by the Health Access coalition of labor and consumer groups—create a major new state program based on point-of-purchase drug discounts, and would probably result in similar overall discount levels, assuming that drug companies offer voluntary discounts on an ongoing basis.

In addition to comparing and contrasting the two ballot initiatives, the report reviews the recent history of drug discount efforts in California, the mixed success of which suggest implementation concerns for both Proposition 78 and 79.

The report, “The California Debate: Competing Drug Discount Programs for Millions of Residents,” does not endorse one measure over the other.

“Voters will need to decide which measure represents a better balance between government involvement and a reliance on drug companies to voluntarily address drug pricing issues,” says Duke.

Bob Stern, president of the Center for Governmental Studies, a nonpartisan organization that works to help individuals participate more effectively in their communities and governments, acknowledges the difficulty of accessing substantive, independent information around the two propositions. “Instead of relying on 30-second ads on the two drug discount initiatives, Californians should turn to nonpartisan analyses such as this one before deciding how to vote on these important measures,” he says.

The report will be posted at [www.medpin.org](http://www.medpin.org) on Tuesday, October 4. A legislative hearing on both propositions will be held in the Capitol on Thursday, October 6.

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