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BLUMENTHAL PRAISES PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE ORDER TO ADDRESS DRUG SHORTAGE CRISIS

(Washington, DC) – Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) today released the following statement in response to President Obama's executive order that will direct the Food and Drug Administration to act to reduce drug shortages.

“This action by the President is a welcome and strong first step to ensuring that a safe and reliable market of life-saving prescription drugs is available to doctors and patients. However, we must continue to build on this measure with new steps that go further to combat the escalating crisis of drug shortages and address a dysfunctional market. The Department of Justice should investigate promptly and thoroughly. The Department of Justice's investigation must determine whether there have been illegal practices such as price-gouging or collusion, which merit civil or criminal actions. This effort should also include fact-finding efforts on the part of the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Inspector General, and other investigative bodies. These shortages endanger patients by compromising care and adding hundreds of millions in unnecessary costs to our health care system.”

Last year, the FDA reported 178 drugs in shortage; shortages cost the U.S. health care system over \$200 million annually. Blumenthal first called for a Government Accountability Office investigation in March 2011. In September, Senators Blumenthal, Klobuchar and Casey requested that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provide “a comprehensive briefing on both the FDA hearing and subsequent recommendations under consideration by [HHS] at the earliest possible date” to continue to address the drug shortage crisis facing patients and health care providers across the country.

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