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CVS in Boston Urged to “Clean Up Its Act” by Consumer Advocacy, Community Groups as Part of City-Wide Day of Action to Cure CVS

BOSTON – Nearly two-dozen consumer advocacy and community groups rallied outside the Downtown Crossing CVS pharmacy today before dispatching to all 33 metro-Boston CVS drugstores in delegations, asking the drugstore chain to “clean up its act.” Carrying brooms, dust pans and signs, demonstrators chanted “Hey hey, ho ho, expired goods have got to go” as part of city-wide efforts to urge CVS to reform its retail practices.

CVS, which had the most state pricing violations of any retailer in Massachusetts last year, is also being criticized for [selling expired goods](#), [failing to provide equal access](#) to its stores and [locking up condoms](#) in some area stores. This requires customers to ask for staff assistance to buy condoms, which creates a barrier and stigmatization of condoms and condom users, according to public health advocates. CVS recently unlocked condoms in Dorchester CVS stores after community protest there. Advocates are calling on CVS to adopt a nation-wide policy to keep all condoms unlocked, among other issues.

Boston CVS Stores’ Problems Reflect National Pattern

Cure CVS of Boston’s day of action comes as a similar event took place today in Miami regarding South Florida CVS stores’ troubling track record on the same issues. Late last week, community advocates in Houston, Texas and San Diego, California urged CVS to stop selling expired goods, while Philadelphia city council members and the city consumer advocate urged the city solicitor to bring legal action against CVS for selling expired goods there. Last June, Attorney General Jerry Brown criticized CVS for selling expired products at dozens of stores in Southern California. The Attorney General said the practice violated laws against deceptive advertising and unfair business practices. The New York State Attorney General has sued CVS to stop the company from selling expired goods.

Community Reaction

“We’re here today to urge CVS to put the consumer first by ensuring they follow the state’s important price accuracy and disclosure laws, protect consumers’ privacy when they purchase prescription drugs in their stores, and remove all expired items from the shelves. When it comes to these issues, CVS’s track record is poor and must improve,” said Deirdre Cummings, of MASSPIRG, one of the state’s leading consumer advocacy organizations.

Horace Small of the Union of Minority Neighborhoods and one of the organizers of the demonstrations, said, “CVS is already known to many as not only an expensive place to shop, but the most penalized retailer in the state for price violations and overcharging customers. We’re

coming together today to tell CVS to stop overcharging us, stop selling us expired products, stop disrespecting our families and our communities.”

Consumer advocates and community groups are reacting to the findings of a study, “Cure CVS: from low quality to high prices, CVS is failing our communities, available at www.CureCVSNow.org.

Also participating in the Cure CVS action today were consumer advocacy and community groups including Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition; Healing Our Land; Boston Workers Alliance; Alternatives for the Community and Environment; Greater Four Corners Action Coalition; Woman’s Institute for Leadership Development; Jewish Labor Committee; Arlington St. Church (Social Action Committee); Project Voice, American Friends Service Committee; Jobs with Justice; Gay and Lesbian Labor Activist Network; Northeastern University Student Feminist Organization; Boston College Global Justice Project; Neighbor to Neighbor; United for a Fair Economy; Interfaith Worker Justice; Public Health at Tufts; Tufts Feminist Alliance; Student Labor Action Movement; and more.

For more information visit www.CureCVSNow.org

Cure CVS is an initiative by Change to Win and partner organizations to reform the drugstore industry, starting with CVS, the country’s leading provider of prescription drugs and largest drugstore chain. By joining concerned citizen groups with the six million members of Change to Win unions, Cure CVS aims to ensure that CVS provides equal access across all communities and income levels to its stores and services, offers fair and accurate prices, provides quality products and services, protects customers’ privacy and puts quality pharmacy care first.

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