

Obama targets prescription drugs shortages

October 31 2011

US President Barack Obama signed an executive order Monday directing action to head off shortages in life-saving prescription drugs, in his latest bid to bypass gridlock in Congress.

Obama's order strengthens the Federal Drug Administration's power to predict and tackle potential shortages of prescription drugs and to halt illegal price gouging of life-saving medicines during supply shortfalls.

"The shortage of prescription drugs drives up costs, leaves consumers vulnerable to price gouging and threatens our health and safety," said Obama said as he signed the order in the Oval Office.

"This is a problem we can't wait to fix. That's why today, I am directing my administration to take steps to protect consumers from [drug shortages](#).

"I'm committed to working with Congress and industry to keep tackling this problem going forward."

The president signed the order at his desk flanked by Bonnie Frawley, a pharmacy manager from Boston who regularly deals with drugs shortages and Jay Cuetara, a [cancer patient](#) who was a victim of drugs shortages.

The FDA says the number of shortages of [prescription drugs](#) nearly tripled between 2005 and 2010.

Obama, in a campaign entitled "We Can't Wait" has flexed the executive powers of the presidency several times in recent weeks, in an effort to show Americans he is serious about creating jobs and easing their problems.

"Congress has been trying since February to do something about this. It has not yet been able to get it done, and it is the belief of this administration, as well as folks like Bonnie and Jay, that we can't wait for action," Obama said.

"We have got to go ahead and move forward."

Obama's recent moves include offering help to certain homeowners who are underwater in their mortgages and an effort to reduce the burden faced by graduates saddled with costly student loans.

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