



# Prescriptions jump for EpiPen alternatives

By Chelsea Rice | March 3, 2017

**M**ylan drew widespread criticism last summer when news reports revealed that the company had hiked the price of EpiPens by 500 percent.

But with no generic versions of the lifesaving allergy medicine, and few comparable products on the market at the time, the vast majority of physicians were not prescribing alternatives – until now.

Data from the athenahealth network shows that prescriptions for EpiPen alternatives have quadrupled since the beginning of 2017.

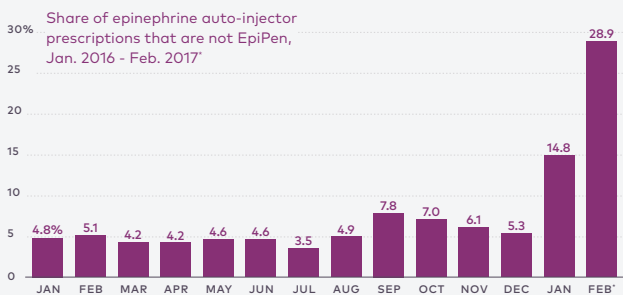
Researchers analyzed more than 60,000 prescriptions for epinephrine auto-injectors, written for 50,000 patients by more than 1,400 providers nationwide, between January 2016 to February 2017. Since the start of 2016, they found, the percentage of epinephrine auto-injector prescriptions that went to products other than EpiPen has more than doubled.

And that share has increased significantly in the last two months alone. At the end of 2016, EpiPen alternatives made up only 5.3 percent of prescriptions for epinephrine auto-injectors. By the last full week of February, that figure had grown to 28.9 percent.

Why the sudden, significant shift? Patients and providers might be reaching for the alternatives and generics that have recently hit the shelves, as the industry responds to widespread demand.

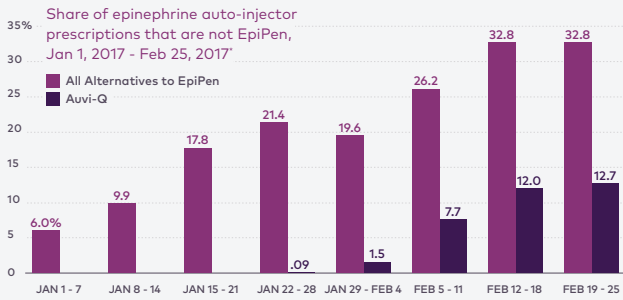
Generic options captured in the data include Mylan's own EpiPen alternative, at half the price of the original, which the company released in mid-December. Kaleo's AUVI-Q was re-released in mid-February, and CVS recently announced that it will stock the generic version of Adrenaclick, a \$110 EpiPen alternative.

**Prescriptions for alternatives to EpiPen rise dramatically in 2017**



Source: athenaResearch  
 Sample: Over 60,000 prescriptions for epinephrine auto-injectors written for over 50,000 patients by over 1,400 providers writing prescriptions for epinephrine auto-injector prescriptions since the beginning of 2016.  
 \*February 2017 data current through 2/25/2017

## Quick pick-up for the reintroduced Auvi-Q product



Source: athenaResearch  
Sample: Over 60,000 prescriptions for epinephrine auto-injectors written to over 50,000 patients by over 1,400 providers writing prescriptions for epinephrine auto-injector prescriptions since the beginning of 2016.

Changes from insurers could also be affecting prescription patterns. In January, health insurance giant Cigna began to only cover generic options to EpiPen.

Before news of the price hikes broke, prescriptions for EpiPens had been steadily increasing since 2013 – peaking every year in August, when parents of children with severe allergies typically stock up on the life-saving devices for use in schools.

Clarification: An earlier version of this story stated that CVS recently announced stocking a \$10 version of Adrenaclick. CVS recently announced that it will stock the generic version of Adrenaclick, which is \$10 with a \$100 manufacturer's coupon.

*Chelsea Rice is a staff writer for athenaInsight. Follow her on Twitter @ChelseaRice. Data analysis by Anna Zink.*



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