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## New Data Cited To Reject Anthem Rate Hike

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Connecticut's attorney general and state healthcare advocate say new information shows Anthem's proposed rate hikes for individual policies will hit more consumers hard than previously thought and should be rejected.

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield proposed increases averaging 23 percent and ranging as high as 32 percent for people under 65 who bought individual plans on their own. But new data from the company shows about one in five members with individual plans would see rate hikes of at least 30 percent, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and state Healthcare Advocate Kevin Lembo said Monday.

Also, the rate hike, which would take effect Oct. 1, would come in addition to an automatic premium increase for each member who ages up into the next five-year age category, the officials note. So some members could see an overall premium increase of 40 percent or more during the year.

"This new information provides significant factual evidence supporting our position that the Insurance Department should reject the proposed rate increase as excessive," Blumenthal and Lembo said. "The data disclosed by Anthem - only after the attorney general requested it - shows how dramatically devastating the rate hike would be."

The two officials asked Mary Ellen Breault, the Insurance Department's officer for its July 20

public hearing on Anthem's proposed rates, to include the new data in the hearing record so it can be considered in the decision.

The new information, Lembo and Blumenthal told Breault in their letter Monday, "also confirms that Anthem continues to profit handsomely from these individual policies at the current rate and does not need any increase on any product."

Less than 80 cents of every premium dollar from individual health plans have funded medical services for consumers, the two officials said.

"Anthem relies on faulty and phantom factors to justify its rate increase, inflating its projected health care costs by double counting rising health claims of insureds as they age," Blumenthal and Lembo said. The company, they added, assesses all consumers for the cost of broker commissions even if the individual did not use a broker."

Anthem had no immediate comment. The Insurance Department has said Anthem won't get the full rate increase it's requesting.

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