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**NYS LEGISLATURE PASSES FIRST STEP IN FIGHT AGAINST “SUPERBUGS”;
ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP BILL PASSES BOTH HOUSES
A.5847 (WOERNER) / S.2191 (KAVANAGH)**

**BILL REQUIRES THAT HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES ADOPT PROGRAMS TO
ADDRESS THE GROWTH OF ANTIBIOTIC-RESISTANT INFECTIONS**

**NYPIRG URGES LAWMAKERS TO “FINISH THE JOB” AND TACKLE THE GROWTH OF
“SUPERBUGS” IN AGRICULTURE**

(Albany) — The New York State Legislature today approved legislation that requires all nursing homes and hospitals to develop stewardship programs to reduce the misuse and overuse of antibiotics – which have resulted in the rise of “superbugs,” infections that are resistant to antibiotics. According to the World Health Organization, unless actions are taken, by the middle of this century more people will die from antibiotic-resistant infections than die of cancer.

The overwhelming majority of New York hospitals are reported to be following the stewardship guidance set by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), yet when it comes to nursing homes, based on the New York Attorney General’s report, infection control measures are inadequate. Poor infection controls can contribute to the growth of antibiotic-resistant infections.

While approval of this bill tackles one critical area in the fight against antibiotic resistance, NYPIRG urged lawmakers to “finish the job” by approving legislation to reduce the overuse and misuse of antibiotics on farm animals.

Two-thirds of human-important antibiotics are sold for use on livestock and the CDC estimates that nearly one-quarter of all antibiotic-resistant “superbugs” originate in farm settings. The CDC estimates that at least 35,000 Americans die each year from exposure to such “superbugs.”

NYPIRG urged lawmakers to approve legislation that would reduce the overuse and misuse of antibiotics on farms by prohibiting such use on healthy farm animals. Legislation introduced in the Senate (S.2871, Kavanagh) and in the Assembly (A.3493-A, L. Rosenthal) prevents such usage, and would work in tandem with the bill passed today to treat all the roots of the antibiotic-resistance crisis.

Background: For almost 70 years, the nation has been giving antibiotics to animals raised for food. According to FDA’s most recent data on domestic sales of medically-important antibiotics, 65% of them are sold for use in livestock. When antibiotics are given to food-producing animals, they kill most of the bacteria in the animals. The resistant bacteria, however, survive and can contaminate animal products during slaughtering and processing. They can also contaminate fruits and vegetables via contaminated soil or water, especially when animal manure is used as fertilizer. Antibiotic-resistant bacteria can contaminate food prepared on germ-filled surfaces, and they can contaminate the environment via animal feces. According to the CDC, approximately 1 in 4 antibiotic-resistant infections are caused by germs from food and animals. *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* – bacteria that commonly contaminate food – are estimated to cause 410,000 antibiotic-resistant infections in the U.S. each year. [Agricultural use must be included in any comprehensive response to the threat posed by antibiotic-resistant infections.](#)

