

January 23, 2016

Senator Ron Wyden
Senator Chuck Grassley
Senate Committee on Finance
Washington, DC 20510-6200

Dear Senators:

As a retired RN and a health care consumer, I am grateful to the U.S. Senate's Committee on Finance in-depth investigation into the practices of Gilead Sciences, Inc. regarding the development, pricing, marketing and selling of hepatitis C drug Sovaldi and Harvoni.

Gilead Sciences, Inc. is not alone in outrageous revenue maximization strategies of breakthrough and generic medications. U.S. pharmaceuticals continue to increase costs exorbitantly - beyond reasonable profit margins and citizens are impacted significantly either by making the hard choices of spend increasing proportions of their income on healthcare at the expense of other necessary items of daily living or going without sometimes life-sustaining medications. Blatantly or inconspicuously, these companies keep their prices high and discounts low without regard to anything other than stockholders' profits.

I would offer that all or some of the following be considered:

1. Open up competition worldwide by easing regulations that prevent citizens from purchasing drugs abroad. Drug imports can be limited to proven manufacturers in countries with strong licensing and inspections criteria.
2. Enact laws allowing the insurers within the ACA and Medicare to negotiate drug costs.
3. Limit specialty tiers in private health plans.
4. Require drugmakers publicize/disclose what they spend on research and development and the marketing of these drugs.
5. Implement laws with substantive penalties and strict enforcement to control these costs and require transparency. These penalties should be administered to the individual CEOs as well as the company itself. There must be strict enforcement of laws that protect citizens from greedy corporate individuals, and not just small fines to the company, reaping huge dividends from their insatiable appetite for outrageous profit.

Thank you for this opportunity to address the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance regarding these concerns. Affordable, accessible breakthrough and generic drugs for all citizens from drugmakers who are transparent about their expenses to profit ratios is mandatory.

Sincerely,

Connie S. Ross

