



2000 S Street, NW • Washington, DC  
(p) 202.232.6749 (f) 202.232.6750  
[www.healthhiv.org](http://www.healthhiv.org)

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Finance Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Grassley and Senator Wyden:

I am writing in response to your letter seeking input on how to address the financial impact of high prices of breakthrough drugs, ensuring patient access, and improving marketplace transparency.

The two areas of query in your letter that are of great importance to us are value and access. In the HIV/AIDS community, these two issues work hand in hand.

When it comes to value, new and innovative therapies help people with HIV/AIDS lead longer, more productive lives, while helping to control health care costs. In the last two decades, we have seen remarkable progress, transforming the disease from an acute, fatal illness to a chronic condition. Improvements produced by novel treatment options have been far above what could have been anticipated or achieved at the time of the initial introduction of these individual medicines.

Over time, practical experience and a growing body of data reveal unforeseen elements of value for individual therapies. The full value and benefit of an individual therapy cannot be known at the time of FDA approval – for HIV, hepatitis, and other disease areas – so it is important that patients and clinicians have access to a full range of treatment options.

Policy approaches that aim to assess the definitive value of a therapy at the time of introduction will fail to capture its full value over time and will act as a disincentive to long-term research, innovation, and patient care. Flexible policies that are sensitive to the way the evidence of value emerges over time will help ensure that new treatments are properly valued and available to patients. Such policies, which are in line with the incremental scientific process, also will promote future advances by properly incentivizing innovation.

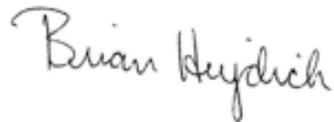
When it comes to potential restrictions to access, we stand in support of policies that guarantee access to treatment and support for low-income, disabled and elderly Americans living with HIV and other diseases like viral hepatitis. We believe repealing the non-interference provision in Medicare Part D could jeopardize beneficiaries' access

to comprehensive, affordable prescription drug coverage, and would undermine an already-successful program.

Similarly, states that have expanded Medicaid under the ACA provide care and access to proven, effective treatments for our most vulnerable populations, and restricting that access – whether to medications and therapies for people with HIV/AIDS or other diseases – would be discriminatory and cruel. We are very concerned with the increasing cost of prescription drugs and support ongoing meaningful efforts to address it. We also appreciate the importance of having access to innovative, breakthrough, and even curative therapies. Access to these innovative medications drives our concern.

Thank you for reaching out to the patient community for input on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Hujdich".

Brian Hujdich  
Executive Director  
HealthHIV  
2000 S Street NW, Suite 3  
Washington, D.C. 20009  
202.232.6749  
brian@healthhiv.org