

On the Record: The Real Reason for High Priced Drugs - Big Pharma

Members of Congress and the White House are speaking out against the true reason that Americans pay so much for their drugs: Big Pharma. Here's what key representatives are saying about Big Pharma's responsibility for high drug prices:

The White House, responding to Merck's lawsuit against HHS challenging Medicare negotiation:

"Year after year, pharmaceutical giants record profits as they charge middle class families' astronomical prices – often for drugs invented generations ago. Big Pharma regularly forces Americans to pay many times what they do customers in other countries for the exact medicines. For decades, the pharma lobby has blocked efforts to let Medicare negotiate lower drug costs."

Senator John Cornyn (R-TX)

"[It] seems to me that this whole area is rife with gamesmanship. We've even had examples of drugs that have had as many as 100 different patents - so-called patent thickets, and product hopping, and other games being shipped by the industry to maximize price. I don't begrudge the industry making a return on their investment, and I know it's highly risky, but I do object to the gamesmanship and the playing a rigged system."

Representative Debbie Dingell (D-MI), in response to Merck's lawsuit:

"I call it extortion when [Big Pharma] increase the cost of drugs more than inflation, to seniors who have no choice – not only seniors, but to patients across this country that have no other choice."

Representative Jamie Raskin (D-MD)

"...Drug companies are ultimately responsible for setting high prices, and in fact have poured millions of dollars into TV and social media ads as well as lobbying to deflect attention away from their own role in setting high drug prices, by shining the spotlight on the PBMs."

Representative Mike Garcia (R-CA)

"The biggest obstacle to fair pricing is Big Pharma."

Senator Patty Murray (D-WA)

"Merck is doing everything it can to protect its profits at the expense of patients who need their prescriptions to stay healthy and get treatment for everything from cancer to diabetes. While big drug companies may not want to be at the negotiating table, the American people are sick and tired of giant pharmaceutical corporations putting their executives' paychecks above patients—and Democrats will keep fighting back to put patients over profits at every turn."

Representative Summer Lee (D-PA)

"This committee's three-year investigation into drug companies discovered many ways that pharmaceutical companies prioritize profits over people, including flagrant anti-competitive behavior to maintain their monopoly pricing."

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)

"PBMs are perhaps the most powerful institutional counterweight to the pharmaceutical industry. ... [Big Pharma has done] marvelous political jujitsu to turn concern about its pricing into critiques of PBMs, who are perhaps their greatest institutional adversary and one of the most powerful forces for pushing [the pharmaceutical industry's] prices down."

Drew Keyes, former policy advisor, Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA)

"Falling for Big Pharma's blame game by targeting PBMs won't help everyday Americans get the care they need. That's what Congress needs to understand."

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT)

"[Big Pharma is] manipulating the patent system, very effectively. They make tiny tweaks to their product and they keep their exclusive patents for years and years and years, preventing generic competition."

Dr. Anthony LoSasso, Professor and Chair, Department of Economics, DePaul University

"The effort to regulate and, I fear, neuter the impact of PBMs only plays into the hands of the pharmaceutical industry."