

PATIENTS FOR AFFORDABLE DRUGS NOW™

May 16, 2019

Chairman Elijah Cummings
House Oversight and Reform Committee
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Jim Jordan
House Oversight and Reform Committee
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cummings and Ranking Member Jordan,

My name is David Mitchell. I am a cancer patient and the founder of Patients For Affordable Drugs Now. I am writing today with concern about the high cost of HIV preventative drugs.

Patients For Affordable Drugs Now is the only national patient organization focused exclusively on policies to lower prescription drug prices. We are bipartisan and independent. We don't accept funding from any organizations that profit from the development or distribution of prescription drugs.

As patients, we believe deeply in the importance of developing treatments, cures, and, in the case of HIV, preventative medications for a debilitating disease. However, patients and taxpayers are often paying for this vital innovation twice; first by taxpayer funded research that led to the innovation and then at the pharmacy counter in the form of high prices set by corporations such as Gilead.

In 2015, the US government patented preventative treatment for HIV. The research for this treatment effectively gave Truvada, an old drug already on the market from Gilead, a new use and a different population to target. This research was funded by \$50 million in federal grants.¹

Today, Gilead charges up to \$2,000 for a one month's supply of the medication that costs about \$6 to make.^{2,3} Due in part to these high prices, about 82% of the at-risk population does not take Truvada for HIV prevention.⁴ Meanwhile, nearly 40,000 new Americans are diagnosed with HIV each year.⁵

Earlier this week, Gilead announced it would donate enough Truvada to treat 200,000 people per year until 2030. This donation means that 36 percent of the people that need the drug will receive it; up from the 18 percent who take it now.⁶ This is not enough. Instead of these inadequate measures, Gilead should acknowledge the investment patients and taxpayers already made in Truvada and lower the list price of the drug so it is affordable for all Americans who will benefit from treatment.

We commend the committee for examining this important issue, and we hope you will develop and propose clear actions to ensure Truvada is available to all Americans who need it for preventative HIV treatment.

Sincerely,

David Mitchell
Cancer Patient and Founder
Patients For Affordable Drugs

¹https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/pharma-giant-profits-from-hiv-treatment-funded-by-taxpayers-and-patented-by-the-government/2019/03/26/cee5afb4-40fc-11e9-9361-301ffb5bd5e6_story.html?utm_term=.e4fcb89936be

²https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/pharma-giant-profits-from-hiv-treatment-funded-by-taxpayers-and-patented-by-the-government/2019/03/26/cee5afb4-40fc-11e9-9361-301ffb5bd5e6_story.html?utm_term=.e4fcb89936be

³<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/13/opinion/truvada-gilead-hiv-trump.html>

⁴<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/13/opinion/truvada-gilead-hiv-trump.html>

⁵<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/statistics.html>

⁶<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/13/opinion/truvada-gilead-hiv-trump.html>