Gilead Reaps $3.48 Billion in Second Quarter Sovaldi Sales

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With $3.48 billion in sales of the hepatitis C virus (HCV) drug Sovaldi (sofosbuvir), Gilead Sciences reported a second-quarter revenue of $6.53 billion, Reuters reports. The daily pill has also earned Gilead lashings in the press and from hep C advocates for its thousand-dollar-per-day pricing. Sovaldi was approved in December 2013, and by the end of March, it raked in $2.3 billion in first quarter sales, already shattering the record for any new drug's first year on the market.

According to a statement from John C. Martin, PhD, Gilead's chairman and chief executive officer, "Sovaldi has been prescribed for more than 80,000 patients in the U.S. and Europe, underscoring the medical community's recognition of the benefits of this product. We look forward to making Sovaldi available in additional countries."

$3.03 billion of Sovaldi sales were in the United States, where an estimated 3.5 million people are living with hep C. A 12-week regimen of the therapy costs $84,000, although some people may have to take the drug twice that long, which doubles the cost.

The report made no mention of Gilead's antiretroviral Truvada (tenofovir/emtricitabine) in terms of its use as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) against HIV. Gilead has opted not to engage in any kind of direct promotion of the drug for that indication.

Truvada is only approved for use as PrEP in the United States, where it is otherwise a very commonly prescribed treatment for HIV. U.S. sales of the drug increased by 6 percent during the first six months of 2014 when compared with the same period in 2013. This is an increase of nearly $44 million in half-year sales, or the equivalent of about 6,750 people taking the drug, given an approximate $13,000 per year price tag. Because Truvada prescriptions for HIV treatment may have moved in either direction while PrEP prescriptions probably have risen, there is no way to differentiate from these sales figures how many people might be taking PrEP in the United States.

By Gilead's most recent estimate, 1,774 people filled prescriptions for Truvada as PrEP between January 2011 and March 2013. However, this figure does not represent thousands of people participating in ongoing PrEP research studies who are taking the drug to prevent HIV. Anecdotal

evidence suggests that the rate of new PrEP prescriptions has risen significantly during 2014, but there has been no official word from Gilead to support this.

To read the Gilead release, click here.

To read the Reuters article, click here.

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