



Hepatitis C Coalition Launches White House Petition for the Cure

February 22, 2013

The HCV Coalition for the Cure has launched a We the People petition, which is sent to the White House, asking Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) and Gilead Sciences to advance their promising new treatment for hepatitis C virus (HCV), according to a coalition statement.

The petition drive seeks 100,000 signatures by March 21, which is the threshold required to make the White House respond. It urges the pharmaceutical giants to set aside corporate interests so they can advance the therapy. It also calls for the White House to offer BMS and Gilead incentives to push forward their treatment.

A combination of drugs from Gilead and BMS tested in 2012 were found to achieve a 100 percent cure rate in Phase II trials for three of the most common types of liver disease. Traditional treatments for hepatitis C are only effective in 40 percent of cases. The new all-oral treatment also has much milder side effects—fatigue, headache and nausea—than the traditionally debilitating chemo-style HCV therapy.

However, each company has refused to collaborate on further research into this cure, and instead both are attempting to replicate each other's drugs. Gilead recently withdrew from collaborations with BMS, pulling its drug from the studies.

This new petition follows an earlier petition at Change.org that was signed by more than 11,000 people and supported by consumer advocate organizations critical of the pharmaceutical industry.

To read the statement and sign the petition, visit hepc-cured.com.

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<http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/article/hcv-petition-for-the-cure-23524-1873923157>