Hepatitis C Treatment in Australia: A world breakthrough

December 24, 2015 By Greg Jefferys

The developments in Hepatitis C treatment in Australia over the last week demonstrate the pressure that can be brought to bear on greed driven international pharmaceutical companies such as Gilead if people power can hit them where it hurts... in the pocket.

This week has seen the Australian government offer Australian residents the best deal for Hep C treatment any where in the world.

From April 2016 all Australians with Hep C will be able to access treatment from combinations of Sofosbuvir with either Ledipasvir or Daclatasvir. The government will be paying Gilead and Bristol Myers Squibb between $10,000 and $20,000 per person treated depending on the combination of Hep C medication used.

Apparently the Australian government has budgeted for 6,500 treatments per year over the next five years (the current treatment rate over the past four years has not been above 4,000 per year using the Interferon Simprevir Ribavirin treatments)

The drug companies have agreed that if more than 6,500 people require Hep C treatment in any given year then they will supply the medication free to treat them. This means that if 10,000 people with Hep C seek treatment next year the drug companies will give the medicine free to the last 3,500.

An extraordinary deal, but why have they done this deal?

It’s a deal that seems to be too good to be true.

The reason is simple, between Dr Freeman’s FixHepC Buyers’ Club and my small efforts, the next year would have seen more than 5,000 Australians treated with generic Harvoni, generic Sofosbuvir and generic Daclatasvir. In other words virtually all Australians who wanted to be treated for Hep C would have been able to do so without a cent flowing to the Gilead or Bristol Myers Squibb because everyone was getting their Hep C meds from generic sources.

So Big Pharma had a simple choice, they could either hold out for the $50,000+ per treatment that they had wanting for the past two years and get nothing or do a deal with the government that meant they still made some money out of the Australian Hep C population.

The flow of generic Hep C medicines into Australia is what turned the tide and gave the Australian government a powerful negotiating position.

It was only when the drug companies were faced with the loss of an entire marketplace for their Hep C medicines that they came to the table and did a deal that was favorable to the government and to Australian people with Hep C. This occurred because Australia was the only “ first world” country where generic Hep C treatment was available to everyone.

If other countries like the USA, UK or Canada or Italy or where ever followed Australia’s example and made it easy for their citizen to access generic Hep C medicines not only would it save the lives of their citizen it would also save those governments many billions of dollars.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.