New Hepatitis C Drug Compared to the Price of a Maserati

October 16, 2014 By Hep Staff

This editorial, 'The Pandemic We Are Ignoring,' came out on the heels of the FDA's recent approval of Gilead Sciences new hepatitis C drug, Harvoni. *In These Times* senior editor Terry J. Allen writes, "With 180 million people worldwide infected with hep-C, including 3 million to 5 million Americans (many times the 1.1 million Americans living with HIV), we are talking a huge epidemic and a large, desperate market. Up to half a million people around the world die of hep-C each year. Sovaldi could save most of them--if they could afford it."

Referring to the cost of Sovaldi, which costs less per pill than Harvoni, Allen notes, "That sum would buy a Maserati SQ4 (with $10K in change) or a double-wide mobile home, or feed a thrifty family of four for 11 years. Supplementary drugs can boost the 12-week price to near $100,000...With 180 million people worldwide infected with hep C, including 3 million to 5 million Americans (many times the 1.1 million Americans living with HIV), we are talking a huge epidemic and a large, desperate market. Up to half a million people around the world die of hep-C each year. Sovaldi could save most of them--if they could afford it."

Allen goes on to say, "The launch--the biggest ever of a new drug--put Gilead on track to reap more than $10 billion in 2014 sales, virtually guaranteeing it will quickly recoup its investment. Meanwhile, Gilead avoided hundreds of millions of dollars in U.S. taxes by transferring its patent for Sovaldi to its Irish subsidiary."

To read the entire Allen's article, click here. Then tell us your thoughts on the topic in the comments below.

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