



For Immediate Release

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Fair Pricing Coalition Applauds AbbVie/Express Scripts Deal for Viekira Pak, Urges Similar Price Negotiations Across Payer Landscape to Maximize Access to Curative Hepatitis C Treatment

In addition to welcoming U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of Viekira Pak™ (ombitasvir, paritaprevir and ritonavir tablets; dasabuvir tablets) for hepatitis C virus (HCV) genotype 1 infection on December 19, 2014, the Fair Pricing Coalition (FPC) applauds manufacturer AbbVie's deal with pharmacy benefit management (PBM) organization Express Scripts to ensure access to the co-packaged curative regimen for all people living with hepatitis C virus (HCV) for whom treatment is indicated.

"Viekira Pak is an important addition to the expanding curative treatment armamentarium for hepatitis C, with its documented 91 to 100 percent cure rates in Phase III clinical trials involving people with HCV genotype 1, the most common form of the infection in the United States," said FPC Co-Chair Lynda Dee. "No less exciting is the recently announced pricing deal between AbbVie and Express Scripts, which will make highly curative therapy available to many people with HCV genotype 1 unable to access other combination regimens, such as Gilead Science's Harvoni® (ledipasvir and sofosbuvir), due to cost-containment restrictions."

Under the terms of the deal announced Sunday, December 21, AbbVie will offer a substantial discount on the co-packaged regimen's Wholesale Acquisition Cost (WAC) price of \$83,300. In exchange, Express Scripts will make Viekira Pak the preferred option to its clients living with HCV genotype 1, regardless of disease severity or the prescriber's specialty. In the absence of this deal, curative therapy may have been limited to those with advanced fibrosis (stage F3 or F4) and those receiving care from a liver disease specialist—both of which are among some of the prior authorization requirements in place for Gilead's Sovaldi® and Harvoni.

Harvoni and emerging options will likely be covered by Express Scripts for patients for whom Viekira Pak is not recommended, such as patients with advanced (decompensated) cirrhosis or for those who cannot tolerate ribavirin (a requirement for individuals with HCV genotype 1a or for patients who have undergone a liver transplant).

The AbbVie/Express Scripts deal is expected to be a game changer in the arena of treatment access, in which manufacturers will no longer be able to charge what they believe the U.S. market will bear, but rather what PBMs and cost-cutting insurance carriers will actually pay for. “Though Express Scripts is the largest PBM in the U.S., it is by no means the only payer covering people living with hepatitis C” said FPC Co-Chair Murray Penner. “We need to see AbbVie continue its good-faith negotiations with other payers, including state Medicaid programs. It will behoove other drug manufacturers to do so as well.”

“Maintaining provider and patient choice is critical to advocacy work focusing on treatment affordability and access,” explained David Evans, an FPC member. “In a landscape where HCV drugs have adopted ever-escalating prices and payers are limiting choice to contain costs, any deal that dramatically expands the number of people who can receive curative therapy must be applauded.”

For qualified individuals living with hepatitis C who have financial difficulties accessing Viekira Pak, the AbbVie Patient Assistance Program provides medication at no cost. A co-pay assistance program will also be available for commercially insured patients being treated with Viekira Pak. Out-of-pocket costs for eligible patients will be as little as \$5.00 per month for most patients. Additionally, AbbVie has launched a patient support program, called proCeed™, which is intended to provide a broad range of patient support options. The proCeed program can be accessed at www.viekira.com or by calling 1-844-2-PROCEED.

The Fair Pricing Coalition, founded by the late Martin Delaney of Project Inform, is a national coalition of activists who work on HIV and viral hepatitis drug pricing issues and to help control drug costs for patients who are privately insured, underinsured and uninsured. The FPC also works to ensure access for recipients of state ADAPs, Medicare, and Medicaid as well as for other underinsured and uninsured individuals. For more information about the Fair Pricing Coalition and its history, visit: fairpricingcoalition.org
