

Exploiting Vulnerability: Big Pharma's Alzheimer's Drug Prices



7 million Alzheimer's disease patients and their families are desperate for new and better treatments, but Big Pharma's high drug prices are keeping them out of reach for those who need them most.

With nearly 7 million Americans suffering from Alzheimer's disease and a [UCLA Fielding School of Public Health projection of 15 million Americans by 2060](#), patients and their families are understandably desperate for better treatments. The prospect of breakthrough drugs is a major step forward in health care providing some hope for those suffering from Alzheimer's. **As they have in the past, though, drugmakers are capitalizing on this need by overinflating their drug prices, and threatening the affordability and sustainability of the health care system.**

New treatments are so expensive they are costing taxpayers billions of dollars.

Alzheimer's drug manufacturers are gouging the Medicare system and taxpayers with their egregiously priced treatments, costing the U.S. health care system billions annually and raising concerns about treatment accessibility.

If only 5% of people with Alzheimer's disease use Alzheimer's treatment, Leqembi, it would cost taxpayers **\$8.9 billion** and push up premiums for all Medicare recipients, estimates, [KFF Health News](#), and according to [The National Institutes of Health](#), taxpayers already spend **over \$3.5 billion** annually on Alzheimer's treatment R&D.

Alzheimer's Drug #1

COST: Released in 2023 at
\$26,500 per year

IMPACT: The cost to Medicare makes Leqembi one of the most expensive taxpayer-funded treatments, costing Medicare \$2B to \$5B per year.

Alzheimer's Drug #2

COST: Released in 2021 at **\$56,000 per year**

IMPACT: Resulted in an estimated 12% increase in Medicare Part B Premiums.

The shocking price tag set by Alzheimer's drug manufacturers remains out of reach for desperate individuals and families living on fixed incomes.

- ▲ Medicare patients administered the drug will be responsible for more than \$5,000 out of pocket each year.*
- ▲ The average Medicare beneficiary's income is around \$30,000 annually.
- ▲ The high cost of treatment raises equity concerns if lower-income Medicare beneficiaries cannot gain access to treatment if they cannot afford it.
- ▲ Big Pharma is well aware of the impact their high drug costs would have on Medicare enrollees. An internal analysis found that the makers of these drugs want to maximize their revenue using an "aggressive" marketing approach. This means that the drugs could cost up to 20% of the patient's income.

Unlimited prices, limited results.



A congressional report on the high prices of these drugs and the FDA approval process said the price upon release - **\$56,000 per year** - was "**unjustifiably high**," and lacked clinical benefit.



An Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER) report found that Leqembi could be cost-effective at an annual price of **\$8,900 to \$21,500** - **significantly less than its actual price**.



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These long-awaited Alzheimer's drug treatments can benefit the individuals and families that are impacted by the disease, but we must hold drug manufacturers accountable for exploiting the urgency of these necessary drugs with their predatory pricing tactics.

#TheProblemIsThePrice

*Source: KFF Health News


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