Cancer Experts Press to Make Treatments More Affordable

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Medications to treat cancer are very expensive. Now, 118 top U.S. oncology experts are pushing for some major reforms in the cancer industry to make these live-saving medications cheaper, according to a plan published in Mayo Clinic Proceedings and reported on by NBC News.

The plan called attention to the 5- to 10-fold increase during the last 15 years in the average price of new cancer drugs in the United States. In addition, the cancer experts suggested that government programs such as Medicare should be granted the ability to negotiate lower cancer medication prices, just like national insurance plans in other countries do.

The paper specifically showed that, in 2014, every new cancer drug the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved was priced at more than $120,000 a year. The average household income in the United States is $52,000 a year.

In the report, experts also pressed for the following reforms to make cancer treatment more affordable: allowing cancer drugs to be imported across borders for personal use; enacting new legislation to stop drug companies from delaying access to generic treatments; and overhauling the U.S. patent system to ensure that pharmaceutical companies cannot prolong exclusivity agreements to maintain higher prices on life-saving treatments.

In response, drug companies argued that the research and development of cancer drugs costs them billions of dollars. In addition, the pharma companies stressed that cancer drug prices need to be kept high to incentivize the production of new treatments down the line. But many medical experts didn't agree with these arguments.

To offer consumers more information about the cancer treatments reform campaign, researchers published a Change.org petition and a Twitter account with the handle @StopHighRxCosts that further details on the initiative. For more information about the high cost of the U.S. cancer industry, click here.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/cancer-price-reforms-27571-9197