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Centers of Medicare and Medicaid
Dept of Health and Human Services
Attention: CMS-4182-P
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RE: Drug costs and insurance companies

I recently read that while seniors on Medicare struggle to pay higher and higher co-insurance, for medications that keep rising astronomically in cost, the insurance companies hide the actual amount they pay for the medications, leading us to think we are paying our co-insurance percentage and that they pay the rest.

For example, I have to pay 40% and my Medicare Advantage plan supposedly pays 60%. But apparently this is not really true? Do the insurance companies actually pay far less for the drugs due to negotiated charges, yet charge us 40% (or whatever our co-insurance is) of the list drug prices?

If this is true, I would like to know. It is a pretty shady and unfair practice, and is probably why insurance companies aren't doing more to lobby Congress to do something about the insane rocketing drug costs.

The current shady but apparently legal practice of companies buying up long held patents and rocketing a price of a drug to thousands of times what the first company was charging, just to make more money while harming the patients, should be something insurance companies are fighting. It is something the government should be dealing with and stopping.

I have experienced this issue with a dermatological cream that I had long gotten for about \$35 a tube in the past. A new company bought up the patent, and the price jumped to over \$700 !!!!! I had to work with the doctor to figure out how to combine 2 other creams to do about the same thing. At least I had an alternative.

A friend, who is also on Medicare, needs a particular blood pressure medication for it to work well for her. She has used the same one for a long time. It too was bought up by a new company and recently jacked up to about \$800 from \$60. On a trip to Germany, she went to a pharmacy and was able to attain the same exact drug there for something like \$30. This is crazy!

Why isn't more being done about these issues? And is it true that insurance companies do not really pay the full percentage of the remainder of the percentage we pay in co-insurance?

Please respond to these questions, and submit my comments for the issues about drugs being considered.

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