Gilead Raises Prices of HIV Meds Twice in Six Months

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Drugmaker Gilead Sciences has increased the price of its HIV meds Complera and Stribild by 7 percent each—to $2,508 and $3,469 a month, respectively, STAT reports. This increase arrives just six months after Gilead raised the price of the combination tablets by 7 and 5 percent.

Gilead did not change the price of its two newer versions of these meds: Odefsey and Genvoya, which are priced at $2,346 and $2,578. An analysis with the financial firm Cowen and Company tells STAT that the price hikes may be a way for Gilead to push doctors to prescribe the newer regimens.

Why would this matter? Because the latest meds include a newer version of the drug tenofovir, called tenofovir alafenamide, or TAF. (The older version is tenofovir disoproxil fumarate, TDF.) Not only is TAF safer than the older version, but it's also under patent until 2022.

"With both public and private payers seriously struggling under the weight of drug price increases that are seriously out of lockstep with rates of inflation in the U.S.—burdens that are ultimately felt by every American—the move should be to lower drug prices to provide a competitive edge," Tim Horn, the HIV project director of Treatment Action Group, told STAT. "Gilead, instead, is choosing to position TAF products in the most artificial and unflattering light possible, by inflating the costs of their older competitors."

The price hike comes after a lawsuit against Gilead alleging that the company purposefully delayed releasing TAF so it could increase profits and patents. Gilead denies the charges. For more about the case, click here.

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