

Pulling the curtain back on the high cost of drugs

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Extreme price hikes for a handful of pharmaceuticals in recent years have severely soured public sentiment toward the industry. Drugmakers are pushing back with a public relations campaign to highlight the new treatments they bring to the table. But industry watchers say what they might need instead is more transparency and perspective, according to the cover story in *Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN)*, the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society.

Rick Mullin, a senior editor at C&EN, notes that part of the industry's reputation problem is one of oversimplification. High drug costs, regardless of the reasoning behind the price tags, are often perceived by the public as gouging. But while some hikes have been deemed indefensible, some industry experts say that in other cases, high prices are a company's way to cover the costs of getting drugs to the market, reflect the complexity of the health care payment system or are calculated based on long-term value—for curing chronic diseases, for example.

The public's tendency to lump high-cost drugs into one category, say industry watchers, shows that the drug [industry](#) needs to communicate its pricing rationale more clearly. And, experts say, pharmaceutical companies also need to understand that even if a therapy can save the health care system or patients thousands of dollars in the long run, if a person has to choose between buying food and buying essential medicine, something needs to change.

More information: "Costly drugs,"
cen.acs.org/articles/95/i9/Pushback.html

Provided by American Chemical Society

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