

HEPATITIS C ACTION & ADVOCACY COALITION (HAAC)

53 Divisadero Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

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Community Notice

PRICE OF "UNBUNDLED" REBETOL (RIBAVIRIN) FOR THE TREATMENT OF HEPATITIS C

On October 3, Schering-Plough Corporation announced that the company was shipping separately packaged (unbundled) Rebetol (ribavirin) capsules to pharmacies for the treatment of chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection in combination with alfa-interferon. The company's announcement did not include Rebetol's price.

The average wholesale price (AWP) of Rebetol, a nucleoside analogue, is \$1,102/month for the 800mg/day dose and \$1,653/month for the 1,200mg/day dose. This is a 52% increase over the price of the same Rebetol included in Rebetron (Intron A + Rebetol combination kits). Of note, the cost of Rebetol (1,200mg) alone is more than the cost of a Rebetron kit (\$1,511/month), which contains the same amount of Rebetol. The Rebetol price is also much higher than that of the highest priced HIV nucleoside analogue on the market, Ziagen (\$385/month). A drug price comparison table is attached.

Early this year, Schering-Plough's PEG-Intron (pegylated interferon alfa-2b) was priced 127% higher than the company's standard interferon (Intron A). If common doses of PEG-Intron and Rebetol are used, the cost of HCV treatment for one patient will increase from \$18,000 to approximately \$25,000 per year.

Compounded ribavirin is still available for patients, healthcare providers, and payers to consider. Compounding pharmacies throughout the country provide ribavirin at about \$150-\$225/month for 800-1,200mg/day dose. Two generic companies have applied to the FDA to manufacture ribavirin, but generic manufacture is currently being challenged in court by Schering-Plough, which could delay the availability of generic ribavirin for up to 30 months.

We provide this information so that patients, healthcare providers, and payers can make informed choices in their own cost-benefit analyses of Rebetol versus compound ribavirin and Peg-Intron versus standard interferon.

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HAAC receives no money from any pharmaceutical company or pharmacy. Our goal is to help folks like us in the HCV community make informed choices and have the access and flexibility to choose the treatment that will best meet their individual needs.

DRUG PRICE COMPARISON **(Figures obtained for commonly used doses October 5, 2001)**

Average Wholesale Price (AWP)

Medication	Brand	per month	per year
HIV Nucleoside Analogues			
zalcitabine (ddC)	Hivid	\$260	\$3,120
lamivudine (3TC)	Epivir	\$286	\$3,424
didanosine (ddl enteric coated)	Videx	\$287	\$3,444
stavudine (d4T)	Zerit	\$311	\$3,732
zidovudine (AZT)	Retrovir	\$334	\$4,008
abacavir	Ziagen	\$385	\$4,620
HCV Nucleoside Analogue			
ribavirin (800/1200mg)	(compounded)	\$150/225	\$1,800/2,700
ribavirin (1200mg)	Rebetol (in Rebetron kits)	\$1,085	\$13,020
ribavirin (800/1200mg)	Rebetol (separately marked)	\$1,102 / 1,653	\$13,224 / 19,836
HCV Immune Modulators			
interferon a-2b, (3MIU)	Intron A	\$426	\$5,112
PEG-interferon a-2b (120ug)	PEG-Intron	\$965	\$11,580
HCV Combination Treatments			
IFNa-2b + ribavirin (1200mg)	(separate/compounded)	\$651	\$7,812
PEG-Intron + ribavirin (800mg)	(compounded)	\$1,115	\$13,380

IFNa-2b + Rebetol (1200mg)	Rebetron	\$1,511	\$18,132
PEG-Intron + Rebetol (800mg)	(separately marketed)	\$2,067	\$24,804
