

According to HHS, “10.1 million people misused prescription opioids in the past year” (HHS 2023). The opioid crisis is one of the many issues that can be attributed to the pharmaceutical companies of the United States. Due to the rise of medication costs, shortage of drugs, and initiation of the opioid crisis, our nation is in need of proper restrictions on pharmaceutical companies.

Primarily, the price of medication has risen exponentially in recent years. From January 2022 to January 2023, the cost of 4,264 drugs increased, with an average increase of 15.2 percent (ASPE 2023). In monetary value, “this increase of 15.2 percent translates to \$590, while the previous year’s increase of 11.5 percent translates to \$172.” (ASPE 2023). High prices on prescription drugs makes patient care increasingly difficult. Many are no longer able to afford such prices of medication, especially when insurance fails to cover the cost. Placing a cap on the prices of prescription drugs will make healthcare more attainable for those of lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Secondarily, false information pertaining to prescription drugs led to the opioid crisis, a pandemic that has taken over our nation. Opioids are substances that interact with neurons to relieve pain (Cleveland Clinic 2022). According to the CDC, “More than 760,000 people have died since 1999 from a drug overdose, and nearly 75% of drug overdose deaths in 2020 involved an opioid.” (HHS 2023). In the 1990’s, opioids were introduced as successful in treating pain with no indication of addictivity. By 2017, the HHS declared a public health emergency due to the opioid crisis (HHS 2023). The disbursement of prescription drugs must be regulated with proper restrictions. Background checks should be performed on a patient prior to receiving any type of opioid. Consistent blood and urine samples should be taken on all users of drugs with the potential to be addictive.

In addition, shortages of drugs have created nationwide panic. The FDA plays a legal role in the regulation of drug shortages. Unfortunately, the FDA can’t prevent firms from discontinuing a drug. Companies often discontinue older drugs to profit off of new drugs (FDA 2023). As a part of healthcare, the concern of pharmaceuticals should be the patients, not the finances. For example, Insulin is a drug vital to patients with diabetes. As outlined by the World Health Organization, “For more than 60 million people living with type 2 diabetes, insulin is essential in reducing the risk of kidney failure, blindness and limb amputation” (WHO 2023) In recent years, insulin has become increasingly difficult to obtain, not to mention expensive. This poses an obvious threat to diabetics across the country. With shortages of drugs like insulin, patients everywhere suffer. To prevent shortages and discontinuations, pharmaceutical companies must be regulated. With rules and restrictions placed on the distribution of medications, many will benefit from filled prescriptions.

In final remarks, healthcare is being damaged by pharmaceutical companies. Due to high medication costs, drug shortages, and the current opioid crisis, our nation is in need of proper restrictions on these companies. If restrictions are placed on pharmaceutical companies, healthcare will become more affordable, safe, and attainable in the future.

Sources:

[Why Americans Hate Big Pharma More Than Ever | American Council on Science and Health \(acsh.org\)](https://www.acsh.org/why-americans-hate-big-pharma-more-than-ever/)

[Opioid Facts and Statistics | HHS.gov](https://www.hhs.gov/od/od-facts-and-statistics/)

[Changes in the List Prices of Prescription Drugs, 2017-2023 | ASPE \(hhs.gov\)](#)

[New WHO report maps barriers to insulin availability and suggests actions to promote universal access](#)

[The Latest in Drug Shortages | FDA](#)