Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
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September 22, 2015

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz Chairman Committee on Oversight and Government Reform U.S. House of Representatives Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to request that the Oversight Committee hold a hearing next week with Mr. Martin Shkreli, the 32-year-old former hedge fund manager whose company recently purchased the life-saving drug Daraprim and increased the price from \$13.50 to \$750 per pill "overnight."

In responding to a virtually instant outcry of criticism, Mr. Shkreli tweeted that his price increase is "a great thing for society." He also berated a reporter as a "moron" for requesting an explanation for his indefensible price increase.

The Infectious Diseases Society of America has also objected to this massive price increase, sending a letter urging Mr. Shkreli's company to "help us improve public health by immediately implementing a rational and fair pricing strategy." The group also warned that toxoplasmosis, the parasitic infection Daraprim treats, would have "severe consequences if not effectively treated in pregnant women, patients with HIV infection, cancers and other conditions that compromise the immune system."

¹ Drug Goes From \$13.50 a Tablet to \$750, Overnight, New York Times (Sept. 20, 2015) (online at www.nytimes.com/2015/09/21/business/a-huge-overnight-increase-in-a-drugs-price-raises-protests.html).

² Martin Shkreli Is Big Pharma's Biggest A**hole, Daily Beast (Sept. 21, 2015) (online at www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/09/21/martin-shkreli-is-big-pharma-s-biggest-asshole.html).

³ CEO Who Raised Price of Old Pill More Than \$700 Calls Journalist a 'Moron' for Asking Why, Washington Post (Sept. 22, 2015) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/news/to-your-health/wp/2015/09/21/ceo-of-company-that-raised-the-price-of-old-pill-hundreds-of-dollars-overnight-calls-journalist-a-moron-for-asking-why/).

⁴ Letter from Stephen B. Calderwood, President, Infectious Diseases Society of America, and Adaora Adimora, Chair, HIV Medicine Association, to Tom Evegan and Kevin Bernier, Turing Pharmaceuticals LLC (Sept. 8, 2015) (online at

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Rather than heeding this request from a group of more than 10,000 infectious disease physicians and scientists, Mr. Shkreli mocked their concerns. When asked how he could sleep at night, Mr. Shkreli tweeted, "you know, ambien." 5

Mr. Shkreli claims he will invest the proceeds from his price increase toward researching a better drug for treating toxoplasmosis, but he has provided no evidence of his claims. In addition, Dr. Wendy Armstrong, a professor of infectious disease at Emory University, has stated: "I certainly don't think this is one of those diseases where we have been clamoring for better therapies."

For these reasons, I request that the Committee hold a bipartisan hearing next week on the skyrocketing price of Daraprim and invite Mr. Shkreli to testify. The Committee could also invite health care professionals and policy experts that can shed light on this issue, including Judith Aberg, M.D., the Chief of Infectious Diseases at Mount Sinai Medical School, Stephen Calderwood, M.D., President of IDSA, and Dr. Stephen Schondelmeyer, Professor and Head of Pharmaceutical Care and Health Systems at the University of Minnesota.

When our Committee met at the beginning of this Congress, we agreed unanimously to investigate the increasing price of certain prescription drugs, but the Committee has held no hearings and has issued no document requests to drug companies this year. I hope you will seriously consider this request, and I also hope we can work together in a bipartisan manner to address this issue on behalf of our constituents and our country.

Sincerely,

Elijah E. Cummings Ranking Member

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http://www.hivma.org/uploadedFiles/HIVMA/HomePageContent/PyrimethamineLetterFINAL.pdf).

⁵ CEO Who Raised Price of Old Pill More Than \$700 Calls Journalist a 'Moron' for Asking Why, Washington Post (Sept. 22, 2015).

⁶ Martin Shkreli on Raising Price of AIDS Drug 5,000 Percent: 'I Think Profits Are a Great Thing,' Newsweek (Sept. 21, 2015) (online at www.newsweek.com/martin-shkreli-daraprim-drug-prices-374922).

⁷ Drug Goes From \$13.50 a Tablet to \$750, Overnight, New York Times (Sept. 20, 2015).