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Contentious Battles Continue over New Hepatitis C Medications

The contentious cost of Hepatitis C (hep C) drugs, namely Gilead Sciences Inc.'s Harvoni and Sovaldi, prompted the National Association of Medicaid Directors (NAMd) to pen an October 28th letter to congressional leaders asking for action on prescription drug prices. NAMd claims several states are reporting hepatitis C drug expenditures double or triple the amount spent in 2013, and claim the disease is particularly relevant because it is at an "intersection of a high-cost therapy and a potentially large population" affected. NAMd also cited the intentions of other drug manufacturers to sell their new hep C drugs at a similar price as reason for concern. The association recommended several solutions to congress, including enacting "downward pricing" and mandating a discount to Medicaid beneficiaries. Health insurers have called the new hep C drugs game-changers for their potential impact on the industry from a cost and care perspective.

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