David Mitchell – Founder, Patients for Affordable Drugs, USA



This is both a hopeful and terrifying time to be a patient in the USA

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David Mitchell, founder of Patients for Affordable Drugs, looks at the US pharmaceutical industry from the patients' perspective.

What are the key factors and trends shaping the pharmaceutical sector in the US?

I have incurable multiple myeloma. My hope is that advances in medicine will keep patients like me alive. At the same time, this is both a hopeful and terrifying time to be a patient in the USA, because of the drug prices tied to those discoveries. Pharmaceutical corporations need to be cognizant of a trend rising along with advances in medicine — the palpable anger and fear the American feels when it comes to the prices of their medications. We must balance innovation often underwritten in part by taxpayers with prices affordable to patients and our system.

Where do you see growth opportunities coming from for the industry in the next few years?

I would consider it growth if the industry stopped pointing fingers at others in the supply chain and took responsibility for unconscionable list prices they and they alone set. We can have both innovation and responsible profit margins.

What are your predictions for the industry for the next 10-12 months?

We are based in Washington, DC, where pharma has gotten a lot of attention for its pricing practices from the get-go of the 116th Congress. As I write, February has not yet concluded, and seven pharma CEOs have already testified before the Senate Finance Committee. We've heard from mothers who describe children devastated emotionally or killed by the cost of insulin at Senate and House hearings. We know that the Congress is launching inquiries into insulin and patent reform. And legislation this industry fought tooth and nail last year, like the CREATES Act, which would close a loophole preventing cheaper generics from reaching the market, is under serious consideration, with much less protest from the industry in 2019 so far. I think we can reasonably expect some reform to move in the next year as patients continue to speak out and our collective voice grows louder.

Could you give our audience a taste of what they can expect from your session at the Summit in May, please.

I'm going to bring the patient voice to the table. And I'm giving advance notice — patients are angry. They are cutting their pills in half, forgoing their prescriptions and some of them are unable to afford to buy groceries and pick up their medicines.

The system of "access" to high-priced drugs is structured to burden the sick with additional worry and paperwork and fuel pharmaceutical profit. What executives can expect to hear is that the drug pricing system in America is broken and the ways we believe it can be fixed to ensure innovation, affordability and accessibility.

Why are events such as the FT US Pharma and Biotech Summit important for the industry?

First of all, I want to say, thank you for inviting Patients For Affordable Drugs to your event. We are a patient advocacy group unlike the majority of others — we are not funded by the pharmaceutical industry. It means we come into your house and we can be honest with all of you about what life is like for Americans unable to afford prescription drugs. These conversations may be uncomfortable at times, but they are necessary so we can move forward as a society and make sure innovations

reach the patients they were made for. Ultimately, we both want the same things. Innovation and affordable prescription drugs. I am confident this can and will be achieved.

You can also join a live discussion with David and many other thought leaders in the pharmaceutical industry at the **FT US Pharma and Biotech Summit** in **NYC**, on **May 14.** Find out more on **live.ft.com/USPharma**

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