

Common Sense Oncology warns that escalating cancer drug prices may turn new treatments into unfulfilled promises

Kingston, Canada, October 27, 2026 – The development of innovative new cancer medicines that meaningfully improve patient survival and quality of life is to be celebrated. But a [new commentary from Common Sense Oncology](#) published in *The Lancet Oncology*¹ warns that spiraling prices risk turning these new treatments into unfulfilled promises, because they may not be accessible to the patients who need them.

Highlighting the example of daraxonrasib, a breakthrough pancreatic cancer drug, Common Sense Oncology's commentary cautions that the launch price of US\$39,800 per month (the equivalent of C\$56,300 per month) will leave patients with a staggering financial burden. Additionally, if the US launch price is maintained across other countries, decision-makers in public health systems are unlikely to find that the drug is cost-effective, despite its significant medical benefits, potentially limiting its availability.

"Daraxonrasib meaningfully improves patient survival for one of the most lethal cancers," says co-author Richard Sullivan, professor of cancer policy & global health and director of the Institute of Cancer Policy at King's College London. "But if global prices follow the US, health systems will not be able to afford it, potentially leaving the majority of pancreatic cancer patients without access. That's an unfulfilled promise to current and future patients."

Concerns about cancer medicine pricing are not new, and daraxonrasib is just one of the more recent examples of treatments that can cost nearly US\$500,000 per year, creating significant financial burdens for patients and health systems as well as a major policy challenge for countries in both high- and low-resource settings.

"Everyone agrees that pharmaceutical companies are entitled to make a profit, but with an annual price of C\$730,000 we have moved from fair pricing to unfair use of market power. Ultimately, that harms patients and health systems," says Dr. Christopher Booth, co-founder of the Common Sense Oncology initiative and Director of the Division of Cancer Care and Epidemiology at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada. "Scientists, doctors, and industry all push hard to develop new treatments that can improve outcomes for patients, but innovation without access doesn't help someone live longer or have a better quality of life. If we apply the same level of persistence to improving policy and regulatory mechanisms, we can better ensure fair pricing, financial sustainability, and equitable access to cancer treatment."

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Common Sense Oncology's commentary calls for collective action across the cancer community—including oncologists, researchers, professional societies, civil society, community organizations, people with lived experience, advocates, regulators, and legislators.

“We can take inspiration from activists in the 1980s and 1990s who successfully drove down the price of pharmaceuticals during the HIV/AIDS crisis,” says Carolyn Taylor, an advocate for people-centred cancer care and the executive director of Global Focus on Cancer. “Developing a new cancer drug is only possible with the participation of real people, real patients in clinical trials. Access to the products of that research should not be determined by wealth and geography. We must work together to ensure equality of access to cancer treatments.”

¹C.M. Booth, C. Taylor, C.G.C.A. Jackson, et al. “The unfulfilled promise of effective cancer medicines priced beyond reach,” *The Lancet Oncology*, 2026;
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanonc/article/PIIS1470-2045\(26\)00533-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanonc/article/PIIS1470-2045(26)00533-4/fulltext)

About Common Sense Oncology

Common Sense Oncology (CSO) is a global network of oncologists, researchers, advocates, policy makers, and people with lived experience of cancer. We believe that patients should have equitable access to cancer treatments that provide meaningful improvements in outcomes, irrespective of where they live. CSO works collaboratively with people who have lived experience, organizations in the cancer field, and regulators to ensure that the outcomes that matter to patients and the public are at the centre of cancer research, cancer care delivery, and cancer systems policy.

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