



641 S St NW,
Washington, DC, 20001
www.uaem.org

Activists to UCLA: Drop the patent case.

Activists deliver 3,500 signatures to University of California President Janet Napolitano demanding the university stop backing Big Pharma's interests in the Delhi High Court, India.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

LOS ANGELES, CA - As President Napolitano returns to her desk this week in preparation for a new school year, she may need to prioritize action on affordable cancer medicines developed at her university. This morning nearly 3,500 signatures were delivered to Janet Napolitano, the President of University of California (UC) system by Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM). The effort is a part of efforts to urge the institution to drop a patent claim filed by UCLA in the Indian High Court for a widely used prostate cancer medicine. Enzalutamide is a publicly-funded prostate cancer drug discovered on the university campus and UCLA's filing would bar affordable access to this life-saving drug worldwide.

UAEM students' sentiments have been echoed by healthcare professionals, academics and advocacy groups since May 2017. Many organizations representing these interests are also urging the university to prioritize patient lives over corporate profits.

"As a primary care physician, I see my patients struggling daily to afford the medicines they need because of their exorbitant prices. It's troubling to see UCLA worsen this reality for millions worldwide by upholding this patent claim especially for a drug discovered with hard-earned taxpayer dollars. I would hope the institution would act now, ahead of a troubling precedent being set of universities putting profits before patients if the patent claim is upheld," said Dr. Reshma Ramachandran, Family Medicine Resident at UCLA/Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center and Board Member of Universities Allied for Essential Medicines, North America.

"We are greatly disappointed that Sherry Lansing, David Geffen and Janet Napolitano are hell-bent on cutting off the possibility of low cost generic versions of enzalutamide in developing countries where billions live. The University of California has declined to provide a rationale for why it is compelled to pursue patent protection in India, after the patent was rejected by the India patent office. The prices in developing countries by Astellas are exorbitant and the decision by the board of regents to support this litigation are a stain on the character of each member," said Jamie Love, Director of Knowledge Ecology International.

UCLA has been fighting an apparent proxy battle for patent rights on behalf of the pharmaceutical corporations Pfizer and Astellas despite having already earned over half a billion US dollars for the university with the sale of their own patent rights to the drug. This battle contradicts the licensing guidelines adopted by the UC system, which recommends that academic institutions should prioritize unmet geographical and economic need, in addition to upholding the social mission to serve.

The prostate cancer drug enzalutamide, marketed as Xtandi by Pfizer and Astellas, is currently sold in the U.S. for as much as \$150,000 per annual treatment. The patent filed with the Indian High Court in Delhi by UCLA on behalf of the pharmaceutical corporations would prevent generic production of the drug in India, preventing access for millions given that the country is known for developing and exporting most of the world's generic medications.

UAEM student and Southern California resident, Sernah Essien, expressed frustration at the University's actions, stating, "UCLA is undermining both their public mission and prior commitment to accessibility by pursuing this patent. As the flagship Southern California public university, their actions are disappointing, especially to residents whose taxes funded the discovery of a drug they seek to make inaccessible."

The Court decision expected in the coming weeks will have great ramifications for the global health community and inform future patent claims as well as licensing patterns. The judge will indicate whether or not UCLA will receive a patent for exclusive production of the drug barring access immediately of a more affordable generic alternative. Students are demanding that the University act with the same moral integrity they expect of their students and calling for the administration to drop the patent claim, lest they set a dangerous precedent of pursuing exclusive patents and blocking generic drug production in India.

They are sending a resounding message to universities, pharmaceutical companies, and the public in line with UAEM's refrain that no one should be sick because they are poor or be poor because they are sick.

Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM)

Contact: Dr. Reshma Ramachandran

(786)-271-1531

reshmagar@gmail.com

UAEM: Universities Allied for Essential Medicines is a global grassroots movement of university students and academics organizing on their campuses to ensure that publicly-funded medical research meets the needs of people everywhere regardless of income. Find out more at <http://uaem.org/>