

A strong, year-end finish for the pharmaceutical industry

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As 2014 comes to a close, pharmaceutical companies have much to celebrate. An article in *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN), the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, takes a look back at the milestones the drug industry hit this year, some of its stumbles and what it could mean for patients.

Rick Mullin, a senior editor at C&EN, reports that drugmakers' global sales this year are expected to reach \$901 billion, an increase of 5.5 percent over 2013 figures. Much of this boost has been driven by brisk business in the U.S., where sales are expected to grow by 12 percent by year's end. But among the rosy numbers, some areas of the industry were still tightening belts, slashing investments in research and development, and cutting jobs.

Does this picture translate into benefits for patients? On the bright side, 2014 produced a bumper crop of new drugs, including breakthrough therapies in oncology and hepatitis C. The catch is not everyone who needs these medicines can afford them. One course of Gilead Science's new hepatitis C treatment, for example, costs \$84,000—a price tag so large that it triggered a U.S. Senate inquiry. Looking ahead, one expert predicts bridging this yawning gap between the drug industry's pricing model and what patients can afford will be an ongoing theme.

More information: "Mixed Signals" -
cen.acs.org/articles/92/i49/Mixed-Signals.html

Provided by American Chemical Society

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