



What Experts Are Saying About Humira Biosimilars

Updated April 1, 2023

The launch of biosimilars to Humira has been a highly anticipated moment. Industry experts have widely covered the recent launch of the first biosimilar, the dual-pricing strategy deployed by the manufacturer, and how PBMs and other middlemen, rather than patients, stand to benefit:

“Our crazy drug channel led Amgen to launch both a high-list/high-rebate and a low-list/low-rebate version of the drug...Unfortunately, we should expect most PBMs and plan sponsors to embrace the high-list/high-rebate version. The plans that adopt the higher-priced biosimilar will get bigger rebates, while patients with coinsurance and deductibles end up paying more out-of-pocket.”

Adam Fein, Drug Channels

“The Warped Incentives Behind Amgen’s Humira Biosimilar Pricing—And What We Can Learn From Semglee and Repatha” (February, 2023)¹

“The current pricing structure of brand drugs—with high list prices and much lower post-rebate net prices—reflects current market incentives. Reimbursement for Pharmacy Benefit Managers, for example, is often a function of the list price of medications.”

Scott Gottlieb and Benedic Ippolito, AEI

“Initial Implications from the Pricing of Humira Biosimilars” (February 2023)²

¹ <https://www.drugchannels.net/2023/02/the-warped-incentives-behind-amgens.html>

² <https://www.aei.org/health-care/initial-implications-from-the-pricing-of-humira-biosimilars/>

“Additionally, [manufacturer rebates will make list prices relatively uninformative](#). For example, Amgen launched Amjevita with two list prices – 5 and 55 percent below Humira’s list price – and acknowledged that rebates would drive actual prices.”

Alex Brill and Christy Robinson, Matrix Global Advisors

*“Near-Term Expectations for Adalimumab Biosimilars in the United States”
(February 2023)³*

“... Abbvie's rebate agreements with PBMs and plans flat out stipulate that they [cannot provide an advantage](#), such as lower out-of-pocket costs, for biosimilars on the patient's benefit.”

Ralph Pisano, RemedyOne

Press Release “Humira Biosimilars Unlikely to Produce Short-Term Cost Savings: Goodroot White Paper” (January 2023)⁴

“It is just absolutely freaking [insane](#).”

Mark Cuban, Cost Plus Drugs

*Managed Healthcare Executive, “Mark Cuban Assails PBMs at AAM Meeting”
(February 2023)⁵*

“But it’s not just insurers who will benefit, according to Marta Wosinska, a visiting fellow at the USC-Brookings Schaeffer Initiative on Health Policy. [She noted that anyone who gets a cut of the high list price or rebates comes out ahead before any savings reach an employer](#). This list includes wholesalers, as well as specialty pharmacies owned by PBMs.”

Ed Silverman, Stat+ News

“Amgen Pricing for its Humira Biosimilar May Benefit PBMs and Insurers More than Patients” (January 2023)⁶

“In a competitive and transparent industry, rebates wouldn’t matter. Competition would mandate that this money gets passed along to the end consumer via lower premiums. But PBMs are anything but, with top 3 companies having 80% market share and [pricing that’s incredibly opaque](#).”

John Arnold, The Arnold Foundation (February 2023)⁷

³ https://getmga.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Adalimumab_Biosimilars.pdf

⁴ <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/humira-biosimilars-unlikely-to-produce-short-term-cost-savings-goodroot-white-paper-301731377.html>

⁵ <https://www.managedhealthcareexecutive.com/view/the-future-of-savings-in-humira-biosimilars-drug-costs-are-low>

⁶ <https://www.statnews.com/pharmalot/2023/01/31/amgen-humira-biosimilar-pbm-rebates-insurers/>

⁷ <https://twitter.com/JohnArnoldFndtn/status/1621183154282270722>

“AbbVie CEO Richard Gonzalez recently bragged that the company has achieved “over 90% access for Humira at parity,” this year, [meaning it will be placed in the same formulary tier as any biosimilar competitor](#) and patients won’t be subject to any step-editing forcing them to try a biosimilar first or to pay a higher copay for the brand.”

Sarah Karlin-Smith, Pink Sheet

“The Immortal Humira? In Huge Test For US Biosimilar Policy, Brand May Still Have Edge” (January, 2023)⁸

“PBM coverage decisions, too often driven by preferences for high-priced high-rebated brands, represent a critical barrier to competition. Policymakers can ensure that patients receive the full value of lower prices from biosimilars by [putting an end to policies](#) that encourage preferences for higher list prices and high rebates.”

Biosimilars Council, a division of AAM

“Humira Biosimilars: Ending a Monopoly, but Savings Will Take Time” (February 2023)⁹

⁸ <https://pink.pharmaintelligence.informa.com/PS147655/The-Immortal-Humira-In-Huge-Test-For-US-Biosimilar-Policy-Brand-May-Still-Have-Edge>

⁹ <https://biosimilarscouncil.org/resource/humira-biosimilars-ending-a-monopoly-but-savings-will-take-time/>