

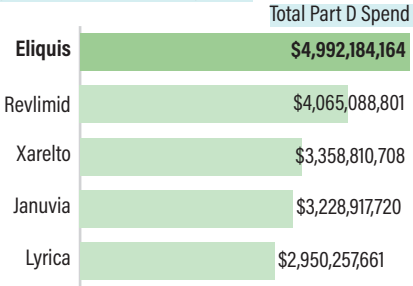
Advertising Dollars Helped Make Eliquis Part D's Most Expensive Drug, Government Report Suggests

by Carina Belles

Drugmakers spent \$17.8 billion on direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA) from 2016 to 2018, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) detailed in a May 2021 report to Congress. Meanwhile, 58% of the \$560 billion that Medicare Parts B and D spent on drugs in the same time period was spent on advertised drugs. While the GAO said other factors such as increased unit prices and doctor prescribing habits make it difficult to establish a strong link between DTCA, beneficiary use and Medicare spending, the agency identified four drugs that were among the costliest for Medicare and had the highest DTCA spending: Eliquis, Humira, Keytruda and Lyrica. Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS)'s Eliquis in particular stands out, as the blood-thinning agent became Part D's most expensive drug in 2018, reaching nearly \$5 billion in spending. The GAO highlighted a marked increase in the use of Eliquis from 2013 to 2014 that correlated to a nearly doubled advertising budget, in addition to its FDA approval for new indications. The use of Eliquis among seniors and its Medicare spend continued to grow even as BMS reduced the drug's DTCA budget.

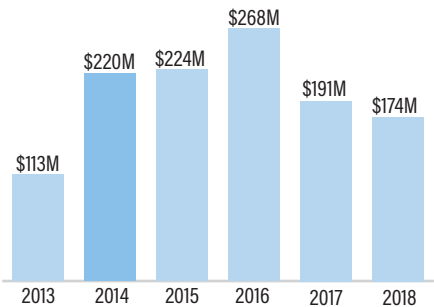
Eliquis was Part D's most expensive drug in 2018.

Top 5 Brand Drugs With Highest Part D Spending, 2018



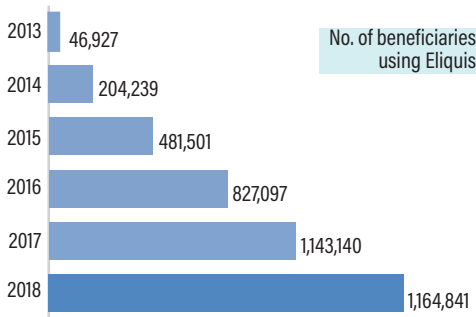
BMS almost doubled ad spend from 2013 to 2014.

DTCA dollars spent on Eliquis, 2013-18



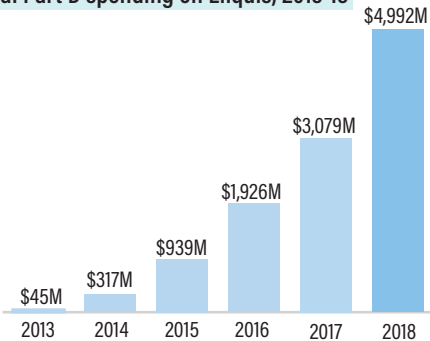
On average, Eliquis use grew 104% annually.

Part D beneficiary use of Eliquis, 2013-18

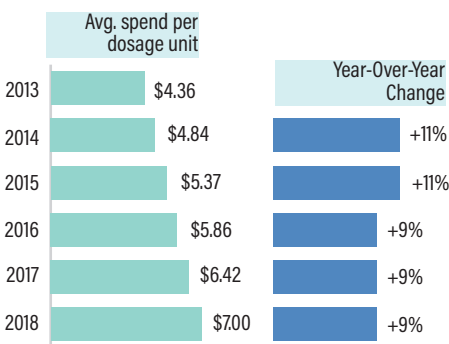


Spending reached nearly \$5B in 2018.

Total Part D spending on Eliquis, 2013-18

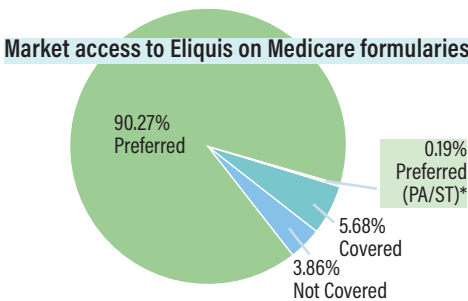


Unit price grew about 10% per year.



Most seniors have preferred access to Eliquis.

Market access to Eliquis on Medicare formularies



*NOTE: PA/ST = Access that requires prior authorization and/or step therapy.

NOTES: The GAO analyzed data from Nielsen Media and CMS's Medicare Part D Drug Spending Dashboard. Medicare Part D spending data does not take into account manufacturer rebates and other concessions. Under the pharmacy benefit, 47.8 million lives are covered under Medicare formularies.

SOURCES: United States Government Accountability Office Report to the Committee on the Judiciary U.S. Senate, "PRESCRIPTION DRUGS: Medicare Spending on Drugs With Direct-to-Consumer Advertising," May 2021; MMIT Analytics as of 7/8/21. Learn more about MMIT's Analytics solution to understand market access and payer coverage