

Drug Pricing Fact Sheet



SUBOXONE

Suboxone is one of the key treatments for opioid addiction. Indivior produces the patented combination medication, which contains two other off-patent medications: buprenorphine (an opioid) and naloxone (a drug that blocks the effects of opioids).

Patent Abuse

Right before Suboxone's patent expired, the company switched patients to the same drug on a dissolvable film strip that it had newly patented. The company claimed that it was important for patients to switch because the new version was safer and less prone to abuse.

Product Hopping

Suboxone's decision to make a small change to an existing drug and patent it as a new medication it is a key example of product hopping patent abuse. The change ultimately resulted in a lawsuit against the company by 35 states for profiteering and unlawful product hopping and, later, a Department of Justice investigation into the safety of the dissolvable film version of the drug.

Competition

Suboxone's patents were ultimately invalidated in court and generic competitors entered the market this year. The example of Suboxone shows that pharmaceutical companies are fully willing to make their products worse and more dangerous to extend their monopolies. Though generic competitors were brought to market this year, that development required court action.

Suboxone By The Numbers



Suboxone Film has a brand size of \$1.7 billion in the United States.



35 states sued Indivior for unlawful product hopping in the wake of the company's decision to patent Suboxone Film.



The lowest price of generic Suboxone is 74% off the average retail price of the name-brand drug.



Indivior's parent company paid \$1.4 billion to settle a Federal lawsuit regarding its marketing of Suboxone.

“Indivior, Maker of Suboxone, Accused of Fraud in Drug Marketing Scheme.”

– NPR News, April 10, 2019

“Indivior Loses Appeal to Block Generic Suboxone Opioid Treatments”

– Reuters, July 12, 2019