



Press Release

Bristol Myers Squibb's monopoly over REYATAZ, which has cost the Peruvian government more than US\$ 23 million over the past four years, would be broken.

Peru's Congressional Health Commission declares atazanavir of public interest

- Compulsory License is a flexibility that parliamentarians saw with optimism, against the abusive price of the drug atazanavir
- Public institutions such as the Office of the Ombudsman, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave a favorable opinion; as well as the Professional Pharmacists and Medical Professionals.
- The pressure of the pharmaceutical industry was hard and constant to avoid the favorable vote, they argued that emergency or extreme urgency is required for the use of the license and that this measure would discourage investments and weaken the rule of law.

Lima, May 25th.-

The Health Commission of the Congress of the Republic approved by majority vote Bill 275/2016-CR, which declares the drug atazanavir, which is used in antiretroviral therapy for people living with HIV, to be of public interest. The drug has generated a surplus of 23 million dollars in the past four years, due to the monopoly that Bristol Myers Squibb has the drug for this medicine.

At first, it seemed that the decision would be postponed for a week; but after a heated debate, with a total of four votes in favor and three abstentions, the legislative initiative was approved.

The president of the Health Commission, Cesar Vasquez Sanchez, said that submitting the patent of Bristol Myers Squibb to a Compulsory License will allow production by other companies without their consent. Congressman Hernando Cevallos, author of the bill, said that "on top of any business interest is the right to health because it is a fundamental right protected by the General Health law."

For civil society organizations that have been demanding the use of compulsory license as a legitimate and sovereign right since 2013, "we see with optimism the use of this measure, which will give a message to the market that abuses of monopoly, because Peru pays the highest prices of medicines when they are in monopoly", said Javier Llamaza of AIS - REDGE. "What happened in the Health Commission is a message that claims the sovereign right to protect the right to health, above a policy of trade opening that is installed in the country for more than 15 years," said Julio Cesar Cruz of the Patients Network.

Should you need further information, please contact:

Marlon Castillo: marlontumbes21@gmail.com, (+51) 942118412