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**Big Drug Companies Continue To Bring In  
Hundreds of Billions While Americans Struggle  
To Afford Skyrocketing Prices**

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# Big Drug Companies Continue To Bring In Hundreds of Billions While Americans Struggle To Afford Skyrocketing Prices

*Big Drug Companies Trying to Block Medicare Drug Negotiations in Court Have Made More Than \$100 Billion in Revenue In Q3 Alone*

Big drug company power has gone unchecked for far too long. Drug makers are [among the most profitable](#) companies in the world – but rather than pricing their drugs reasonably so they are affordable and accessible to people, these companies charge Americans prices [up to four times higher](#) than prices in other high-income countries, leading patients in America to [cut pills and skip doses](#) to make ends meet. Millions of Americans cannot afford their medicines while drug companies make huge profits. Patients should not be paying excessive amounts for the medicines they depend on to pad drug company profits. These companies spend billions rewarding their investors through stock buybacks and dividends, paying their executives millions, and spending millions lobbying to keep their prices high. Prescription drugs don't work if people can't afford them.

President Biden and Democrats in Congress passed a new law to check drug company greed by allowing Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices, and drug companies and their mega-lobbyist allies are suing to keep it from taking effect. One of their arguments is that reducing their revenues will stifle innovation in new drugs, yet on earnings calls their CEOs are telling investors about all the new innovative drugs in their pipelines they are working to bring to market. It's really all about greed and protecting their profits while seniors struggle to afford their medicines.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- We followed the Q3 2023 earnings reports of **16 drug companies**.
- For the third quarter of 2023, these 16 companies reported **\$176.7 billion in total global revenue**, and have announced they are **rewarding shareholders** with dividend payments and stock buybacks totalling **\$26.8 billion**.
- The eight publicly traded drug makers of the first ten drugs selected for Medicare negotiation under the Inflation Reduction Act brought in **more than \$100 billion in the third quarter alone**, and a total of **\$285 billion in the first nine months of 2023**.
- These eight drug companies have **rewarded shareholders with nearly \$20 billion in stock buybacks** to date in 2023.

**Table 1: Earnings Reported By Drug Companies Manufacturing the First Ten Drugs\* Selected For Negotiation Under the Inflation Reduction Act**

Drug Company	Drug(s) Selected for Negotiation	Q3 Revenue	Cumulative Revenue (2023)	Cumulative Stock Buybacks (2023)	Approximate Cumulative Dividend Spending (2023)
AbbVie	Imbruvica	<a href="#">\$13.9 billion</a>	\$40 billion	<a href="#">\$1.96 billion</a>	<a href="#">\$10.45 billion</a>
Amgen	Enbrel	<a href="#">\$6.9 billion</a>	\$20 billion	n/a	<a href="#">\$4.55 billion</a>
AstraZeneca	Farxiga	<a href="#">\$11.5 billion</a>	\$33.8 billion	<a href="#">\$859 million</a>	<a href="#">\$4.5 billion</a>
Bristol Myers Squibb	Eliquis	<a href="#">\$11 billion</a>	\$33.5 billion	<a href="#">\$5.2 billion</a>	<a href="#">\$4.74 billion</a>
Johnson & Johnson	Xarelto, Stelara	<a href="#">\$21 billion</a>	\$63 billion	<a href="#">\$597 million</a>	<a href="#">\$11.77 billion</a>
Merck	Januvia	<a href="#">\$16 billion</a>	\$45.5 billion	<a href="#">\$953 million</a>	<a href="#">\$5.6 billion</a>
Novartis	Entresto	<a href="#">\$11.78 billion</a>	\$25.3 billion	<a href="#">\$7.5 billion</a>	<a href="#">\$7.7 billion</a>
Novo Nordisk	Fiasp/NovoLog	<a href="#">\$8.58 billion</a>	\$23.9 billion	<a href="#">\$2.9 billion</a>	<a href="#">\$4.6 billion</a>
Total		\$100.7 billion	\$285 billion	\$19.96 billion	\$53.94 billion

*\*Boehringer Ingelheim, the manufacturer of Jardiance, is a privately held company.*

*Sources: YCharts, SEC Filings*

**Drug Companies Are Making Billions And Bragging To Investors About Their Future Financial Performance and Investment in Innovation.** Big drug companies have spent the past year fearmongering to lawmakers and patients that lowering drug prices through Medicare’s new negotiation program will reduce innovation in new drugs. But [since](#) the Inflation Reduction Act became law, they have been singing a very different tune to their investors. This quarter’s earnings reports are [no exception](#). Top drug companies bragged to Wall Street about their projected earnings and investment in innovative new drugs:

- **AbbVie [announced](#)** it raked in [over \\$13.9 billion](#) in the third quarter of 2023 – \$24 million more than [expected](#). During the call, CEO Rick Gonzales bragged about the company’s strong growth: “I’m extremely pleased with our continued strong momentum and execution across our business. Our growth platform is substantially outperforming our expectations.” Imbruvica, AbbVie’s blockbuster leukemia drug that was selected among the first ten drugs to have lower prices negotiated by Medicare, brought in more than \$900 million this quarter.

- **Amgen announced** it brought in [\\$6.9 billion](#) this quarter – a 4 percent increase over last year. During the call, CEO Robert A. Bradway [bragged](#): “We are excited about our pipeline progress and our operating performance in the third quarter.” Enbrel, Amgen’s blockbuster immunosuppressant drug that was selected among the first ten drugs to have lower prices negotiated by Medicare, brought in more than [\\$1 billion in sales](#) this quarter. Amgen is [part](#) of PhRMA, which is [suing](#) the Biden administration to stop Medicare from negotiating lower drug prices for patients because it would endanger their massive profits. In Q3, Amgen also [completed its acquisition](#) of Horizon Therapeutics, a drug manufacturer specializing in rare disease drugs. Drug companies erroneously claim Medicare negotiation will threaten investment in drugs for rare diseases, but Amgen is betting a rare drug portfolio will be good for their bottom line; Amgen paid \$27.8 billion for Horizon.
- **Astellas announced** it made \$5.07 billion (USD) this quarter – a \$32 million increase over last year. During the call, CEO Naoki Okamura [bragged](#): “We will achieve significant growth in revenue and profits towards 2025. This initial plan hasn’t been changed and we will continue to aim to achieve our goals.” Astellas was a part of the [lawsuit](#) against the Biden administration to stop Medicare from negotiating lower drug prices for patients because it would endanger their massive profits, but [voluntarily dismissed](#) after their products were not among the first ten drugs selected for Medicare price negotiation. In July, Astellas also [completed](#) its [acquisition](#) of Iveric Bio, a drug manufacturer specializing in ophthalmology treatments. Drug companies erroneously claim Medicare negotiation will threaten investment in innovative drugs, but Astellas is betting an expanded drug portfolio will be good for their bottom line; Astellas paid \$5.9 billion for Iveric.
- **AstraZeneca announced** it took in nearly \$11.5 billion this quarter – a 5 percent increase over last year. During the company’s earnings call, CEO Pascal Soriot [bragged](#): “Our company continued its strong growth trajectory in the third quarter [...] Given the momentum in the year to date we have increased our full-year guidance for total revenue excluding COVID medicines as well as for core [earnings per share].” AstraZeneca is [suing](#) the Biden administration to stop Medicare from negotiating lower drug prices for patients because it would endanger their massive profits. Earlier this year, AstraZeneca [completed its acquisition](#) of Neogene Therapeutics and CinCor. Drug companies erroneously claim Medicare negotiation will threaten investment in innovative drugs, but AstraZeneca is betting an expanded drug portfolio will be good for their bottom line.
- **Bristol Myers Squibb announced** it raked in [\\$11 billion](#) this quarter during their earnings report. Eliquis, Bristol Myers Squibb’s blockbuster blood clot drug that was selected among the first ten drugs to have lower prices negotiated by Medicare, brought in \$2.7 billion this quarter – a [2 percent increase](#) over last year. Bristol Myers Squibb CEO Giovanni Caforio [bragged](#) about “the diversification of our business, the breadth of our new product portfolio and the strength of our pipeline” and touted an earlier [announcement](#) that the company had entered into a definitive merger agreement to acquire Mirati Therapeutics. Meanwhile, his company is simultaneously [suing](#) the Biden administration to stop Medicare from negotiating lower drug prices for patients because it would endanger their massive profits.



- **Eli Lilly** [announced](#) it brought in nearly \$9.5 billion this quarter – a massive 37 percent increase over the same period last year. During the earnings call, CEO & Chair David A. Rick [bragged](#): “Lilly executed on business development priorities in the third quarter, including multiple acquisitions that expand our already robust pipeline. [...] Lilly had another strong quarter in Q3 [...] We remain focused on growth and delivering new, innovative medicines that make life better for millions of patients around the globe. Eli Lilly [has tried to blame](#) the Inflation Reduction Act for supposedly stifling drug development, but [completed](#) the acquisitions of DICE Therapeutics, Versanis Bio, Emergence Therapeutics AG, and Sigilon Therapeutics, and [announced](#) an agreement to acquire POINT Biopharma Global this quarter.

**Drug Companies Are Rewarding Investors With Stock Buybacks And Dividend Increases.** The 16 companies we followed spent \$26.8 billion in rewards for shareholders – \$8.7 billion in the form of stock buybacks and \$18.1 billion in dividend payments this quarter alone. Instead of pricing drugs reasonably, big drug companies are spending billions of dollars on lucrative stock buybacks in order to boost the value of their stocks and increasing dividends to reward their investors:

- **Novartis** [announced](#) that it will initiate [\\$15 billion](#) in stock buybacks through 2025.
- **Bristol Myers Squibb** has [announced \\$5.2 billion](#) in stock buybacks in 2023 so far – \$4 billion of which they initiated in Q3 and expect to complete by the end of 2023.
- **Novo Nordisk** has transacted [\\$2.9 billion](#) in stock buybacks in 2023 so far.
- **AbbVie** has repurchased [\\$1.96 billion](#) in stock buybacks in 2023 so far, and [announced](#) it is rewarding its shareholders with a [4.7 percent dividend increase](#), payable in February 2024.
- **Regeneron** has transacted [\\$1.34 billion](#) in stock buybacks in 2023 so far. In the third quarter, the company [rewarded](#) shareholders with \$507 million in stock buybacks.
- **Merck** has bought [\\$953 million](#) in stock buybacks in 2023 so far, and [announced](#) it is rewarding its shareholders with [\\$466 million](#) just this past quarter. During the earnings call, CEO Rob Davis [assured](#) investors: “We remain committed to our dividend and plan to increase it over time.”
- **AstraZeneca** has transacted [\\$859 million](#) in stock buybacks in 2023 so far.
- **Astellas** [announced](#) it will reward its shareholders by paying a dividend in September at a rate [15 percent higher](#) than the previous year.
- **Amgen** [announced](#) it will reward shareholders by paying a dividend in September at a rate 10 percent higher than the previous year.
- **Sanofi** has rewarded shareholders by paying a dividend [9.5 percent higher](#) than the previous year.



**Table 2: Q3 Earnings Reported By Sixteen Top Drug Companies**

Drug Company	Q3 Revenue	Q3 Stock Buybacks	Q3 Approximate Dividend Spending
AbbVie	\$13.9 billion	\$4 million	\$2.61 billion
Amgen	\$6.9 billion	-	\$1.14 billion
Astellas	\$5.07 billion	-	-
AstraZeneca	\$11.5 billion	-	\$1.44 billion
Bristol Myers Squibb	\$11 billion	\$4 billion	\$1.16 billion
Eli Lilly	\$9.5 billion	-	\$1.07 billion
Gilead	\$7.1 billion	\$300 million	\$953 million
GSK	\$9 billion	-	\$740 million
Johnson & Johnson	\$21 billion	\$929 million	\$2.86 billion
Merck	\$16 billion	\$466 million	\$1.85 billion
Novartis	\$11.78 billion	\$1.625 billion	-
Novo Nordisk	\$8.58 billion	\$895 million	\$1.97 billion
Pfizer	\$13.23 billion	-	\$2.31 billion
Regeneron	\$3.4 billion	\$507 million	-
Roche	\$15.9 billion	-	-
Sanofi	\$12.8 billion	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$176.7 billion</b>	<b>\$8.7 billion</b>	<b>\$18.1 billion</b>

*Sources: YCharts, SEC Filings*