Pharmaceutical drugs are frequently identified as having the fastest increasing prices in the US economy. Health care is a top expenditure in the US economy, representing approximately 25% of the US Federal Budget. Recent high-profile events have flared public dialogue regarding the ethics of drug/pharmaceutical pricing. A non-exhaustive list of events include, Epi-Pen price increases by Mylan, Turin Pharmaceuticals marketing of pyrimethamine (Daraprim), pricing of Hepatitis therapies - ledipasvir/sofosbuvir (Harvoni), deflazacort (Emflaza), and the escalating costs affiliated with oncology related and specialty pharmaceuticals.

There are many perspectives about the “fairness” of these pricing decisions. Many elements may contribute to policy frameworks, including intellectual property protection, research and development, regulatory licensing, marketing, supply chain disruptions, human need, and principles of resource allocation. Accordingly, this is a critical time for all stakeholders to be better informed about the equipoise – interface of science, economics, and ethics in pharmaceutical pricing public policy.

Some of the content to be considered at this Evening Ethics:
- Historical examples and global variability of pharmaceutical pricing
- Intellectual property legal paradigms and duality of pharmaceuticals – health care commodity and tool for profit
- Should pharmaceuticals follow the same economic rules as other commodities?

Background Reading: (contact linda.carrlee@hsc.utah.edu for copies)

Additional optional Reading: