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Arthritis Research Week ...Why Do Drugs Cost So Much?

Arthritis Research Week concluded at the Arthritis and Osteoporosis Center of Maryland this week with a lecture by Dr. Nathan Wei on why drugs cost so much.

“Seven million chemical compounds are screened to find 10,000 that may have the potential to be an effective medicine. Of that 10,000, only one makes it to FDA approval. While companies have 20 years of patent protection, it takes 15.3 years to get the drug through FDA approval. A company has 5 years then to recoup their investment. It takes more than one billion dollars to develop a rheumatoid arthritis drug and it takes about 5 billion dollars to recoup the entire investment over that five years left of patent protection,” states Dr. Nathan Wei.

“Drugs go through a process of Discovery Research which takes an incredible amount of effort, time, and money even before they can start testing the drug in people. Then a drug has to go through four grueling phases of human testing. It’s very costly.” adds Dr. Wei

“The biggest hurdle and one of the biggest costs is finding enough volunteers for clinical trials. Eighty per cent of the delay in getting studies completed is because of the lag with recruiting of volunteers. If people want to reduce the high price of drugs, one thing they can do is volunteer for clinical trials... and encourage their friends and relatives to participate also,” Dr. Wei goes on to say.

“My sister who has severe rheumatoid arthritis and my son who has juvenile ankylosing spondylitis have been two people who have benefited from arthritis research. That is why I am so passionate about arthritis research,” concludes Dr. Wei.

Dr. Wei is a board-certified rheumatologist and Clinical Director of the Arthritis and Osteoporosis Center of Maryland, a nationally respected arthritis research facility, located in Frederick, Maryland.

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