

Note: The following is a verbatim transcript of this interview.

Jim Burress: Tell me about the meeting that you had with the CDC Thursday.

Martin Shkreli : I think it was a very constructive meeting where we talked about ways that Turing Pharmaceuticals can innovate in toxoplasmosis the areas of need, such as the CDC was very adamant that there's a large need in ocular toxoplasmosis that's been abandoned and neglected. And, in fact, the CDC called toxoplasmosis one of its 5 neglected parasitic infections. So, I thought they were very happy to see a pharmaceutical company take a great interest in toxoplasmosis and help eliminate the illness. Specifically the CDC called out the ocular manifestation of the disease, which causes blindness in as many as 5,000 Americans per year, as an opportunity for Turing to help shake back the illness.

Jim Burress: So, are you going on record then that Turing is going to produce an ocular form of Daraprim?

Martin Shkreli : We're going to attempt to produce an ocular form of Daraprim and according to the CDC, they felt that that was something that was needed. Daraprim is considered, generally considered, to be the best medicine for toxoplasmosis. You know, it still has its drawbacks and one of its drawbacks is that it does not have an ocular ophthalmic form. So, we are underway, attempting to create an eyedrop from of the drug. It won't happen overnight. These experiments are very costly and very, very time consuming, especially since Daraprim has never been given in the eye and it's very difficult, technically to get the drug into the eye. So, we'll be spending millions of dollars to try to make it happen. I think it's another sort of good outcome of the price increase that we've done, is that this commitment to do that. And, I think the meeting with the CDC underscores and repeats that we are serious about innovation in this disease. We didn't ask for a meeting if we weren't serious about it.

Jim Burress: I want to clarify. You requested the meeting and you asked the CDC, through it's surveillance capacities, was it seeing toxoplasmosis in 80, 90 year olds who don't necessarily have a compromised immune system from some other illness. They're just getting old.

Martin Shkreli : Exactly. This is something that worried me tremendously as I read about pyrimethamine and toxoplasmosis, I saw more and more published case reports in medical journals about patients dying from elderly autoimmune disease toxoplasmosis. Which, as we all know, the aging population and the great advances in pharmaceuticals have allowed us to live to be 80, 90, 100 years old, and increasing fear that the immune system breaks down at that age. There's some question as to whether reactivation of toxoplasmosis could result in problems for the healthcare system. And, I've seen those medical journals and I wanted to know what the CDC thought of them. And, since they have the

surveillance apparatus and we don't, and it will be, it will be very interesting to see over time if that's the case and I think it underscores the need for new drugs in this area. And the CDC agreed with that, that there are very, very limited ways to treat this illness and that a new treatment would be welcomed.

Jim Burress: Did you all get anything from the CDC as far as commitment for any kind of future partnership?

Martin Shkreli : Well, the CDC doesn't traditionally work with pharmaceutical companies. They were very helpful in serving as a central point of access, you know, the experts at the CDC do interface with other institutions like the NIH, so they gave us the names and numbers of some important people at the NIH and some important folks in academia. And we can work on new treatments with them. You know, the CDC is really surveillance and monitoring system. Epidemiology system. They're wonderful at what they do. They're great at getting numbers through surveys of how many people have illness. But, um, their job isn't to create drugs or test drugs or do anything like that.

So, you know, it was a very nice meeting. We're going to be very, very staying in close touch, but I don't think that they traditionally partner with anyone in the industry.

Jim Burress: Did that price increase come up in your conversations with the CDC?

Martin Shkreli : No. In fact, they ... I think it was a very cordial meeting. You know, I can't characterize how they felt about it, but I think they certainly were very pleasant throughout the whole meeting and they never mentioned the price increase and they certainly understood that we, we were out there and available to create new medicines for this illness. But, we have similar meetings set up with other health authorities, like the FDA. And, we're in the process of setting up those meetings. And, I think that these, these institutions understand what we did, maybe a lot better than the average American. To the CDC and to the FDA and to the NIH, toxoplasmosis is a very scary thing and it needs someone to adopt it. And it has been neglected. In the words of the CDC, it is one of the major neglected illnesses. So, the fact that we're coming in and going to try to take care of this disease, I think these health counterparts and authorities really understand what we're trying to do there.

Jim Burress: In a statement, a spokeswoman says "CDC scientists and staff routinely meet with other scientists, health experts, and officials from public and private institutions and organizations to discuss topics of mutual interest."

Jim Burress, WABE News.