Drug prices will rise at least 5% annually from now until 2020, according to a survey of top pharmacists in the United States. In fact, 89% of the 134 pharmacists* who responded to the survey by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists called this possibility “very likely,” the highest percentage for that response to any of the 56 survey items.

The survey, which was conducted last summer, asked these pharmacists about the likelihood of 56 trends in health care and pharmacy reaching certain levels in their region by 2020.

For example, 76% thought it very likely that health systems will review at least one biosimilar for addition to their formulary sometime in the next four years, and 54% thought it very likely that three quarters of the health systems in their region will experience an increase of at least 25% in the use of antiviral therapy for hepatitis C.

The idea that the price of drugs should be tied to outcomes may be gaining some traction, but these health system pharmacists are skeptical about it catching on fast in chemotherapy. Only 15% thought it very likely that pricing of new chemotherapy agents will be pegged to the success rate in clinical trials, although an additional 52% gave that possibility the lukewarm “somewhat likely” rating. However, 41% thought 75% of the health systems in their area will have risk-sharing arrangements with payers by the end of the century’s second decade.

Despite the enthusiasm for biomarkers and genomic testing, only 10% of the surveyed pharmacists thought it very likely that health systems will make treatment recommendations based on pharmacogenomic information at the point of care. “Point of care” may be an important qualifier here, because past surveys have shown that pharmacists foresee pharmacogenomic testing being done by at least one academic medical center in their region.

**How likely is it that the following will occur by the year 2020 in the geographic region where you work?**

**Health system expenditures for all medications will increase by at least 5% annually.**

*Leaders of the American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists selected 159 pharmacists to be surveyed. They were picked because of their expertise in health system pharmacy practice, knowledge of trends, and ability to analyze the future of pharmacy practice. The response rate to the survey was 84%.

**Source:** American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, “Pharmacy Forecast,” December 2015