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New York, January 11 (RHC)-- The U.S. Food Drug Administration, the FDA, has fast-tracked the approval of a new drug that appears to slow down Alzheimer's disease in its early stages.

Scientists say lecanemab, marketed as Leqembi, is an exciting development in treating the neurodegenerative disorder, which affects around 6 million people in the United States.

Dr. Thomas Wisniewski, Professor of Neurology, Pathology and Psychiatry at the New York University School of Medicine, told reporters: "Thus far we've had no treatments that slowed down or prevented the progression of Alzheimer's disease. What we've had is symptomatic drugs, that they help with some of the clinical symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, but they do nothing to slow down the basic disease progression, the underlying pathology."

But it's not clear how many people the intravenous treatment will help, as it comes in at a yearly cost of \$26,500, and Medicare will only cover the cost if patients are enrolled in a clinical trial. It's possible lecanemab, which is made by Biogen and Eisai, will be fully covered once it receives full FDA approval.

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