



October 25, 2010

Keri Oberg
Associate Director, HIV Community Affairs
Medical Affairs, Virology
Boehringer Ingelheim

Dear Ms. Oberg:

In 2009, ATAC released its first "report card" evaluation of Boehringer Ingelheim's strengths and weaknesses in several categories important to the HIV community. These include scientific innovation, community engagement, patient assistance and fair pricing.

We are pleased to take this opportunity to provide a brief "progress report" on Boehringer Ingelheim's activities during the past year and keep you informed about ATAC's expectations for future improvements.

The membership of ATAC strongly believes that continued progress in the discovery and development of new HIV treatments is critical. Despite great strides made in the efficacy, tolerability, and convenience of antiretroviral therapy over the past few years, too many people with HIV have yet to begin treatment, and an increasing number of those who have begun are finding it difficult to sustain long term adherence. Better HIV medicines, with fewer side effects, greater durability, and more flexible modes of administration should be in development now, so that the next generation of HIV therapy will be ready to meet the need.

In light of the lifetime nature of antiretroviral treatment, ATAC applauds the resurgence of research into finding a "cure" for HIV infection. We encourage Boehringer Ingelheim to join this effort.

The financial burdens of lifetime therapy, for institutions and individuals alike, are increasing daily, with waiting lists for state ADAP programs now having surpassed the 3,000 patient mark. ATAC appreciates efforts to ameliorate this crisis, but finds the best efforts of the government and some companies falling short. We strongly urge Boehringer Ingelheim and every company to find new and innovative ways to make HIV treatment accessible and affordable to all who need it.

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Boehringer Ingelheim Performance Update

The ATAC membership reported that, during the year since we issued our 2009 Report Card, Boehringer Ingelheim has initiated improvements in its patient assistance program, though we find that significant additional improvements in your assistance programs are needed. We commend the development of an improved formulation of Viramune. The ATAC membership urges Boehringer Ingelheim to resume engaging in a meaningful way with the HIV treatment activist community, especially in seeking consultation on the early development of new drugs.

Here are the points identified by ATAC's membership:

In that past year, Boehringer Ingelheim has taken several actions that we believe are in the best interests of people living with HIV, and for which we commend you.

These include:

- launching a monthly co-payment assistance program, and doing so with a charge card mechanism that should technically make it easier for people with mail-order pharmacies to benefit from the program; and
- developing a once-daily version of Viramune

In the coming year, we would like to see Boehringer Ingelheim take further actions to benefit people living with HIV. These include:

- increasing the amount of monthly co-payment assistance that you provide to people taking Viramune and to add a program for those taking Aptivus; changing the eligibility criteria of your patient assistance program (PAP) from 300 to 500% of the federal poverty level so that disenrolled ADAP clients and other patients in need can access life-saving drugs until health care reform is fully implemented;
- keeping price increases at or below the consumer price index for inflation;
- participating in the Welvista program for people who have been put on ADAP waiting lists;
- revisiting your policies regarding meetings between BI and activist groups, such as the ATAC DDC; and
- investing in research on novel therapies to cure HIV infection.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. We greatly appreciate your willingness to remain engaged in constructive dialog with the HIV community. We will be following up with a more comprehensive evaluation in our 2011 HIV Drug Company Report Card next year.

Sincerely,

AIDS Treatment Activists Coalition

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