

ATAC's annual rating of drug company policies and practices

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)	
<i>Grading Categories</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<p>Drug Development Portfolio and Plan— <i>Develops innovative treatments, designs safe and effective clinical trials.</i></p> <p>GSK has HIV drugs in active development, but at the time grades were assigned had not yet sought community input on its development plans. The company primarily communicates with the treatment activist community via an annual meeting among selected community members, usually to discuss topics other than drug development. GSK trials at one time recruited more women and people of color than did those of other companies, though still not in numbers that adequately reflected the demographics of the epidemic.</p>	D+
<p>Access to Drugs— <i>Ensures the earliest and broadest possible access of its HIV drugs.</i></p> <p>GSK has one of the oldest patient assistance programs and was the first company to publicly announce a co-pay program.</p>	B-
<p>Pricing— <i>Prices its products responsibly.</i></p> <p>GSK's corporate predecessor, Burroughs Wellcome, marketed Retrovir (zidovudine, or AZT), the first anti-HIV drug, in 1987. Retrovir was introduced at an extremely high price and this sparked activist demonstrations. More recently, GSK's Ziagen (abacavir) and Lexiva (fosamprenavir) were introduced at prices over one-third higher than those of similar drugs from its competitors. Yearly price increases subsequent to launch are among the highest taken by HIV drug makers.</p>	D
<p>Community Relations— <i>Engages the HIV community on trial design, company conduct and marketing efforts.</i></p> <p>GSK has not formally met with ATAC in more than five years nor consulted with the community on early drug development in a timely enough manner to allow for adjustments to its protocols. Most interactions have not regarded drug development plans, but there has been some focus on timely responses to emerging data on GSK's products. GSK funded some early and innovative programs for women and people of color.</p>	D+
<p>Marketing Practices— <i>Engages in marketing practices that are ethical and honest.</i></p> <p>GSK has extensively used negative and fear-based advertising against its competitors—something that ATAC strongly opposes. GSK received two warning letters from the FDA in 1999 about its marketing to medical providers.</p>	D-
<p>Average Grade:</p>	C-
<p><i>Suggestions for Improvement:</i></p> <p>GSK needs to consult with the community on trial design and development in a timely manner that will allow for community input to be incorporated into trial design. The company should stop instituting high price increases and refrain from using negative, fear-based advertising.</p>	