



October 25, 2010

Donald V. Patton  
Senior Vice President, U.S. Pharmaceuticals  
Abbott Laboratories

Dear Mr. Patton:

In 2009, ATAC released its first "report card" evaluation of Abbott'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 Abbott'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 Abbott 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 the efforts of many in your industry to ameliorate this crisis in this difficult time. We strongly urge Abbott and every company to find new and innovative ways to make HIV treatment accessible and affordable to all who need it.

#### **Abbott Laboratories Performance Update**

The ATAC membership reported that, during the year since we issued our 2009 Report Card, Abbott has initiated improvements in its patient assistance program. We

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also see the cooperation in holding the line on price increases and not raising the price of the new formulation as positive steps. However, the membership continues to perceive Abbott as lagging in its willingness to explore lower Norvir dosing for instance where it may be appropriate. ATAC urges Abbott to engage 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 the past year Abbott 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 co-payment support program for Kaletra and then for Norvir;
- taking no price increase upon the release of the Meltrex version of Norvir;
- working to make your patient assistance program (PAP) easy to access and to qualify for;
- spearheading the launch of the Welvista Program; and,
- negotiating a price agreement with the ADAP Crisis Task Force to minimize the harm to ADAP from steeply reduced state funds.

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

- 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;
- increasing the amount of monthly co-payment assistance that you provide to people taking Norvir and Kaletra, and start coverage at the first dollar of every co-payment for Norvir as is now provided for those taking Kaletra;
- keeping price increases at or below the consumer price index for inflation;
- supporting studies to exploring lower doses of Norvir as boosters to other antiretroviral therapies; 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,

The AIDS Treatment Activists Coalition

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