

ATAC's annual rating of drug company policies and practices

Boehringer Ingelheim	
<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>Boehringer Ingelheim (BI) has two HIV drugs in its very early product pipeline, and at least two drugs for hepatitis C are in early development. The company was initially slow to respond to concerns about potentially fatal side effects of Viramune (nevirapine) in women though it subsequently conducted a thorough investigation of the problem. Women were not adequately represented in FDA approval trials for Aptivus.</p>	D+
<p>Access to Drugs– <i>Ensures the earliest and broadest possible access of its HIV drugs.</i></p> <p>BI has a patient assistance program, but only recently announced plans to help cover co-pays for its drugs.</p>	C-
<p>Pricing– <i>Prices its products responsibly.</i></p> <p>Though Viramune is not the highest priced drug in its class, BI has taken the second highest rate of postlaunch annual price increases among HIV drugs on the market. Its Aptivus was priced higher than all other protease inhibitors at the time of its launch and remains the third most expensive protease inhibitor.</p>	D-
<p>Community Relations– <i>Engages the HIV community on trial design, company conduct and marketing efforts.</i></p> <p>BI has refused to meet with ATAC. The company holds at least one community advisory board meeting per year by invitation only, but such meetings are almost solely devoted to talking about its existing drugs and related issues. Activist advice and concerns about BI studies have generally not been heeded by the company.</p>	D
<p>Marketing Practices– <i>Engages in marketing practices that are ethical and honest.</i></p> <p>BI's advertising and marketing practices are among the more conservative in the industry and have received no FDA warning letters. Information about its patient assistance program, however, is not prominently placed on the BI product websites.</p>	C-
Average Grade	D+
<p><i>Suggestions for Improvement:</i></p> <p>BI needs to consult with the HIV treatment activist community in a meaningful way, institute a co-pay assistance program, and prominently place information about its patient assistance program on its websites.</p>	