THE BIZ OF AID$: Follow the Money

Dealing with AIDS -- and AIDS Inc. -- isn’t fun and games. Here’s a practice round for the real thing.

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GOVERNMENT
$10.8 billion: Uncle Sam's FY2000 AIDS budget. 60% went to HIVer health care, and 26% was funneled through the Ryan White CARE Act. **Trends:** With an economic down-turn and no Bush bully pulpit, expect AIDS priorities to plummet. Republicans back R&D but battle "special" interests.

INSURANCE
$960 million: Life and group-health insurers' annual payout for HIVer claims. With eight of 10 HIVers underinsured, Medicaid picks up the tab for 50% of adults and 90% of kids. **Trends:** With copays rising, ADAPs' long wait lists may be back. And HMOs have slashed mental health coverage. Stressed?

ASOs
$51.4 million: Combined revenue of seven largest national AIDS organizations. The heart of AIDS Inc. includes the staff at 3,200 ASOs in the U.S. **Trends:** HAART-taking HIVers expect more from their caseworkers even as budgets drop. Job training, detox and acupuncture are among the most requested services. No more B'way tix!

DOCTORS
$200,000-plus: Salary of a top-tier AIDS doc. No longer shunned for "risky" career choices, the country's estimated 10,000 HIV docs can earn high six-figures, says the International Association of Physicians in AIDS Care. **Trends:** Docs report managed-care has compromised quality; residents consider AIDS a sexy specialty.

HOSPITALS
$4,410.44: An average 4-day stay (HIVers likely above average for costs). Money-conscious hospitals get HIVers with one major health problem up and out in four days. **Trends:** HMOs push for release regardless of health; AIDS wards close even as AIDS-related hospitalizations likely to rise.

BIG PHARMA
$584 billion: 1999 revenue of top 50 companies. With mergers multiplying like lab mice, some innovative R&D shifts to tiny biotechs. **Trends:** Despite flashy philanthropy, industry is poised to inherit Big Tobacco's mantle of poison PR; global patent battles force companies to drop prices in some countries to compete with generics.

PRIVATE FUNDING
$165 million: Total corporate and foundation giving. In the age of HAART hype, oldtime walks and parties struggle to fill VIP tables. Bill Gates types play Daddy Warbucks to personal faves ($100 million of that total came from him). **Trends:** AIDS giving is down, while overall charitable giving is up, says Funders Concerned About AIDS.

SUPPLEMENTS
$738,000: 2000 sales at DAAIR, the nation's No. 1 distributor of alternative remedies for HIVers. **Trends:** Side effects have created a booming market for more than just immune-boosters. More insurance companies are picking up the copay, making the market still larger (DAAIR's sales are up 48% in two years). Marketing is up, government quality control still weak.

RESEARCHERS
$2 billion: National Institutes of Health FY2000 AIDS spending. (Up $600 mil from '96). 72% of funds are outside grants, a cash cow for companies and universities. $207 mil stayed for in-house studies. **Trends:** Virologists finally making room for immunologists; focus on immune-boosters but little attention to alternative therapies.

MEDIA
$68 billion: Pharma annual marketing. Five major specialized AIDS mags (including *POZ*) together get less than $10 mil of pot. **Trends:** Cutting ads from community pubs for less troublesome mainstream media.

START!
Like it or not, our announcer called your name. How will you fare in this unfair game? Will you hit candlelight vigils or candlelight dinners? Will you burn up the APLA conga line or burn out on the local hotline?

Take your turn in the hot seat. It's on POZ.

Dame Liz invites you to an amfAR soiree.
Reminisce about chocolate martinis with Rock and take home a White Diamonds party bag.

Pay $50,000 per ticket.

Move from Gotham to Green Acres.
New rural doc has only 25 patients, so no more "What's your combo again?" But how up is she on salvage therapy?

Resubscribe to 25 newsletters.

Free happy-hour condoms are back!
Why hit RiteAid when you can stock up at Rawhide? Some ASOs shell out $6,500 each year for latex.

Call the mayor for more.

ADAP drops your OI med to save.
Helms-led Republicans attack federal AIDS funding as too high for too long. But private giving for cancer clocks in at 60% of research dollars -- AIDS' is 5%.
Get Geffen to chip in for giant condom for Helms' house.

Buy microbicides at corner market.
Pending 5-year $375 million congressional funding for R&D, that is. Hello, Hillary?

Next: Chicks get 80 cents for a man's $1!

Rush to ER with mysterious rash.
Doc misdiagnoses it as drug related.

Go off combo, go back to start.

New honey dodges names reporting by testing at an anonymous clinic.
Not so fast -- now she's uncounted by federal AIDS bean-counters.

Make a donation.

Lucky Lazzie, you landed your dream job, so you're off disability and on private insurance.
Now there's a monthly $150 Rx cap and your six anti-HIV meds take you over the top.

Paycheck spent on pills, not that Prada suit.

You need a clean needle to shoot up.
But cops are baiting the local exchange, so you shell out $2 for a sterile syringe from a street buddy (pharmacies buy them for about a dime).

No money for rehab: Go back to jail.

Get out of jail free!
But after getting clean inside, the warden sends you off with only one week of meds.

Call your P.O. ASAP!

Run for local office.
It beats going back to work. Should your Capitol venture take Big Pharma dollars? (Industry shelled out 18 mil bipartisan bucks in 2000.)

Oink, oink.

Take a cruise.
Credit maxed out? In 1995, you could have viaticated all the way to Antigua, but payouts are down 50%.

Cruise the park.

Gone West.
But San Fran housing honchos say lucky HIVers on now-closed wait list might get a place -- in 20 years.

Hitchhike to L.A., sleep under a star.

Forgot to have a baby?
You're still getting screwed -- all AIDS funds at your local women's clinic are earmarked for pre-natal care.

Point to your protease paunch!

Hey, Mickey, let’s start a magazine!
Your itch for a niche gets you nothing but grief from both PCs -- the politically correct and pharma companies.

Take the readers’ love to the bank.

FINISH!

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