One Up, One Down, This just In and Finally....

July 31, 2008 By Paul Dalton

Outrageous, not surprising

A report commissioned by the Black AIDS Institute says that if African Americans were counted as their own country, they would rank in the top 20 of nations affected by HIV. Estimating that there are approximately 600,000 African Americans living with HIV, the report concludes that Blacks in America would have the 16th highest number of HIV infections worldwide.

The report contains two even more alarming findings. First, it found that African Americans with HIV die at rate two and half times that of positive Whites. As a results, taken as a nation, Black Americans life expectancy ranks 105th in the world.

The disproportionate impact of HIV, along with other health disparities suffered by African Americans are not exactly news. Virtually every study looking at questions of health care access and treatment outcomes has found an absolute chasm between racial groups in the US.

Equal Right? Equal Protection?

Sun Sets on Hysteria

On the plus side, the sun is indeed setting on the travel and immigration ban against people living with HIV/AIDS. Attached to the bill to fund the President?s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, this policy will reverse the unnecessary and discriminatory practice of banning positive people from immigrating, or, in most cases travel to the US. It should also allow the International AIDS Conference (starting next week in Mexico City), to return to the US.

Bush signed the bill on Wednesday.

And this just in?.

Abbott and the plaintiffs in the class action lawsuit against them have announced an out of court settlement. Acording to people involved in the suit, the agreement would end the trail, but arguments would be made to the presdiding judge, who could award either 10 or 28 million, depending on whether Abbott or the plaintiffs win their arguments.

While either amount seems small, there are two mitigating circumstances to be aware of. First there are two other suits aimed at Abbott right now- one each my GlaxoSmithKline and RiteAid. Lynda Dee, Executive Director of AIDS Action Baltimore who was involved in the suit claimed in an email that the other plaintiffs might stand a better chance at proving real, monetary damages.

The judgement, while small is significant simply by legally recognizing the predatory nature of Abbott?s decision to quadruple the price of Norvir. At the time of the hike, Project Inform and others claimed that beyond the simple greed factor, this decision was really aimed at creating a competitive advantage for Abbott?s boosted protease inhibitor, Kaletra. Documents released in the course of this suit showed that we were correct.

In other Abbott news, they have announced plans finally to develop a heat stable formulation of Norvir. A press relase from earlier this week confirmed that Abbott is going to file for FDA approval of their ?meltrex? formulation by the end of the year, and present data on this formulation at a late breaker session in Mexico City.

And finally?.

Speaking of Mexico City, I leave tomorrow for the International AIDS Conference. I will be posting daily updates on Project Inform’s Website. Joining me in Mexico will be our newest treatment writer Alan McCord. I will also post regular blogs from the conference.

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