



# AIDS<sup>+</sup>



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## **AIDS: ITS EVERYWHERE YOU WANT TO BE**

**YOU have been pre-approved** to receive the enclosed tri-color AIDS banner, in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of **World AIDS Day** and **Day With(out) Art**. It will **cost you nothing to accept**, and in so doing you will gain the satisfaction of knowing that your display of it will help to put AIDS back into the public eye. Please feel free to display this banner in any arena you deem appropriate.

With the advent of protease inhibitors AIDS has turned a corner and a glimmer of hope has arrived for *some* people with HIV/AIDS. Some is emphasized because as these treatments are ever more expensive and long term survival prolongs the use of such treatments, survival of this disease is predicated on not only informational access, but economic prerequisites as well. This determines who can afford these new drugs and treatments and who cannot. Arbitrarily, survival depends upon where in the world a person lives as availability of life saving information is linked to a community's economic circumstances which determines the access of their own or other nation's medical research, personnel, and supplies. Thus, medically insured citizens with HIV/AIDS of the industrialized west stand a much greater chance of prolonging their lives than any members of African or Asian countries where AIDS is spreading at fire storm speed. By having this ever widening gap between the haves and have-nots perpetuated by economic and nationalistic reasons causes the future well being of us all to be put into jeopardy.

It is with these current conditions surrounding the AIDS crisis that the enclosed sticker is being introduced. In co-opting the logo of a universally recognized corporate credit card company (who have themselves co-opted a generic symbol of nationhood i.e. a flag) It is hopeful that we could address several timely and pertinent issues:

**- The economic/corporate determinism of the AIDS crisis.**

Remember when the title "AIDS Czar" had a faint potential for meaning. The notion that our elected officials would actually be able and willing to oversee and coordinate the fight against AIDS was at best wishful thinking. Scientific research and its applications are determined in large part by the profit motive of large corporate research labs, who guard this data for the sake of patents, prestigious awards, and nationalistic "me first" motivations.

**- The exclusivity of health care.**(Membership has its privileges)

Like a credit card, one's chance of long term survival with HIV/AIDS is determined by membership in an economically viable community. Whether you are insured and, if you are, whether your carrier will cover your medicines determine the quality of your health and your survival. As does residency in those regions of the world that have access to quality medical resources and life saving information.

(cont.)

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**- The global scope of this crisis.**

Borrowing a tag line from the company co-opted, credit card logos, like HIV/AIDS, are "Everywhere You Want To Be." You probably can't find a populated community on this planet without them, having supplanted religious symbols or perhaps even rivaling the Coca-Cola logo in their universal usage. They transcend language, and culture. The international aspect of the AIDS crisis parallels these ubiquitous corporate visual hooks.

**- The relationship this virus has to debt.**

The "buy now pay later" attitude in our economy is also rampant in irresponsible individual sexual/I.V. drug behavior and governmental/corporate short sightedness in education, funding, research and development. This same pattern is present in the biological path the virus assumes by its qualities of dormancy, and accrued devastation.

- The current complacency of the public to follow through on this issue would be spoken to by addressing them in the arena where they are least passive and most sensitive, i.e. as consumers. As the recent Asian stock market crash has demonstrated, the degree of separation between nations is thin; their losses eventually become our own. As with AIDS, marginalized communities at home and in distant societies abroad still are cut off from basic life saving information let alone life prolonging medicines for the infected. Our own children are still being kept in the dark as school boards still suppress this vital data and the price we all pay for this exclusivity, though already high, will inflate to unimaginable levels if allowed to persist.**

The subversive and subtle visual nature of this logo dovetails with the call for a change in perception of where we are at with the AIDS virus today. Namely, from a provincial, myopic, elitist focus to a global, inclusive, and charitable one.

**Give this project your acceptance by prominently displaying or publishing the AIDS banner wherever you work, play, bank, and shop.**

Harvey Weiss  
1998