

Gilead buys US pharma rival Pharmasset

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US biotech firm Gilead Sciences announced plans Monday to acquire rival Pharmasset, a group specializing in treatments for AIDS and hepatitis, for \$11 billion.

The cash deal at \$137 per share "represents an important and exciting opportunity to accelerate Gilead's effort to change the treatment paradigm for [HCV \(hepatitis C virus\)](#) infected patients by developing all-oral regimens for the treatment of the disease regardless of viral genotype," California-based Gilead's chief executive John Martin said.

Pharmasset currently has three clinical-stage product candidates for the treatment of [chronic hepatitis C](#) virus in trials and is hoping for regulatory approval for some of the drugs soon.

"This transaction will serve to drive the long-term growth of our business, and we look forward to working closely with the Pharmasset team to advance a broad clinical program in HCV to address the unmet needs of patients and the medical community." Martin said.

Gilead has been working separately on treatment for patients with chronic hepatitis C and said Pharmasset's compounds "are complementary to Gilead's existing HCV portfolio."

The \$137 per share price in the transaction represents an 89 percent premium to Pharmasset's closing share price on Friday.

Gilead said it has received commitments from Bank of America Merrill

Lynch and Barclays Capital in connection with financing of the transaction.

Currently, there is no human vaccine for [Hepatitis C](#), which is spread through contaminated blood and kills some 350,000 people worldwide each year, according to the [World Health Organization](#).

Between 130 and 170 million people are thought to be infected with chronic forms of the disease.

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