$24M in Gilead Grants to End HIV Where COVID-19 Created Barriers

Gilead Sciences' "Zeroing In" program helps 116 grantees boost HIV innovation, education and outreach in marginalized communities.

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Drugmaker Gilead Sciences awarded a total of $24 million in HIV grants to 116 organizations through its "Zeroing In: Ending the HIV Epidemic" program. The funding aims to provide health care, prevention and education by supporting groups that serve marginalized people most impacted by HIV and COVID-19.

The grantees, spread across 41 countries, work with, for example, communities in the U.S. South, migrants in Europe and isolated families in Nepal.

"Through this funding, we will be able to increase community awareness of HIV and PrEP [pre-exposure prophylaxis] to marginalized communities across Mississippi through trained community health workers," said Christopher Roby, PhD, COO of the Community Health Center Association of Mississippi, in a Gilead press statement on the grants. "We plan to address HIV stigma and structural and institutional barriers associated with HIV care in Mississippi. It is only through support from organizations like Gilead that we will truly be able to end the HIV epidemic."

According to Gilead, the funding will help the grantees focus on three specific areas:

- Comprehensive HIV Innovation Programs: This includes at-home testing efforts that help close the gaps in HIV testing and prevention, supportive service programs and comprehensive HIV prevention programs inclusive of biomedical prevention options.

- Digital Health Innovations: Strategies will address the health literacy divide in accessing digital health services, support digital access in rural areas for better outcomes for people living with HIV or support digital health education for those with language barriers, aging populations,

Indigenous, migrant and stigmatized populations.

- Community Outreach and Education: Community-driven programs will provide resources for HIV community outreach workers, address the lack of culturally appropriate service options, break down barriers between communities and service providers and reduce stigma and improve education around HIV.

“While the HIV community has made tremendous progress toward ending the HIV epidemic, the COVID-19 pandemic created barriers and amplified health inequities in the most marginalized communities,” said Alex Kalomparis, Gilead’s senior vice president of public affairs in the press statement. “We are working with organizations that will reach under-resourced communities and support them to find innovative, effective solutions. ‘Zeroing In’ programs aim to increase access to HIV care and services and build on Gilead’s efforts to help end the epidemic for everyone, everywhere.”

In related news, rap star Lil Nas X recently helped raise over half a million dollars for Gilead’s COMPASS initiative (the name stands for “COMmitment to Partnership in Addressing HIV/AIDS in Southern States”). To read more, see “Elton John and Lil Nas X Reign as Rock Stars of HIV Fundraisers.”

To learn more about PrEP and other methods to prevent HIV, see the POZ Basics section on HIV Prevention.

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