



# Center for AIDS Research in Alabama Receives \$7.5M Grant Renewal

The money will help fund Birmingham's efforts to achieve the UNAIDS 90-90-90 treatment goals.

July 11, 2019 By Caroline Tien

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The University of Alabama at Birmingham's Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) has received a five-year \$7.5 million grant renewal from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. According to a press release from the center, the bulk of the money will be used to fund efforts to curb the epidemic in Birmingham and the Southeast more generally.

Birmingham had the 17th-highest rate of HIV cases in the nation in 2014, data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show. Today, CFAR estimates that 40% of all Alabamians living with HIV—around 6,400 individuals, most of them African-American men—are not virally suppressed, meaning not only that their own health is in jeopardy but also that they can pass on the virus to others.

"We're positioned right in the epicenter of the HIV epidemic in the South, which means we are able to tackle some of the field's most pressing emerging challenges and expand our role as leaders in the fight against HIV regionally, nationally and internationally," said Michael Saag, MD, CFAR's director and a professor in the [school of medicine](#), in the press release. "With this renewal, we will be able to more closely focus on working with community partners to deliver services to the community with the goal of improving outcomes in our patients."

To tackle the local epidemic, CFAR formed "Ending HIV in Alabama," a scientific working group made up of researchers and physicians from across the state. As such, the group works with local and state health departments on achieving the 90-90-90 treatment goals proposed by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The 90-90-90 treatment targets challenge cities and countries to achieve the following by 2020:

- Get 90% of people living with HIV to know their HIV status;
- Get 90% of those who know their status connected to care and on antiretrovirals;
- Get 90% of those on HIV meds virally suppressed.

"We anticipate getting closer to our 90-90-90 goals and making a significant impact over the next

five years” by maintaining “a specific focus on engaging community partners, those living with HIV and those at risk of HIV here in Alabama,” said Jeanne Marrazzo, MD, who, along with Aadia Rana, MD, heads up the Ending HIV in Alabama group.

In related POZ news, read “[Positive Diagnosis](#)” for an interview with Saag about his memoir, [Positive: One Doctor’s Personal Encounters With Death, Life and the U.S. Healthcare System](#). And check out last year’s “[Trailblazing HIV/AIDS Clinic in Alabama Celebrates 30 Years](#)” for a profile on Birmingham’s 1917 Clinic.

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