NIH Announces Grants to Search for HIV Cure

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The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), both of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), have announced that a new pot of money will be made available to scientists who are searching for a cure for HIV. Named after the late HIV activist Martin Delaney, the NIH grants will be given to researchers in one of four areas focused on finding and destroying latent HIV. These hidden pools of HIV, though tiny, are able to quickly reseed the virus if antiretroviral (ARV) treatment is discontinued.

NIH is accepting grant requests through the fall of this year. It will review the requests through the winter and offer one or two awards, totaling $8.5 million, to researchers in the summer of 2011.

In making this announcement, the NIH states: “The eradication of HIV-1 is one of the highest priorities of the NIAID. Over the past two years, a number of meetings and consultations have been held with the HIV-1 scientific community to aid in the planning of initiatives in this research area.... This [announcement is] encouraging hypothesis-driven basic research on HIV-1 persistence, and adding requirements for a translational component and the participation of a private sector collaborator to facilitate movement of the research towards a virus eradication strategy that can be utilized in HIV-1-infected persons.”

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