HIV Vaccine Awareness Day 2024

#HVAD is Saturday, May 18, a time to celebrate the scientists, trial volunteers and others searching for an HIV vaccine!

May 17, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

Saturday, May 18, marks HIV Vaccine Awareness Day (#HVAD), a time to acknowledge and honor the many health care professionals, volunteers, community members, scientists and others working to develop a safe and effective preventive HIV vaccine.

Led by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), HVAD is also an important day to educate communities about the importance of HIV vaccine research.

The March 2023 POZ article "Where Are We Now With HIV Vaccines" offers an overview of the topic following the disappointing results of the large population vaccine trial Mosaico. Now that several traditional vaccines have failed, most experts think more sophisticated approaches will be needed.

In this video from HIV.gov, Carl Dieffenbach, PhD, director of the Division of AIDS at the NIAID, discusses the Mosaico trial results and future directions for HIV vaccine research.

In 2021, 1,086,806 people in the United States were living with HIV and 36,126 people were newly diagnosed with HIV, according to AIDSVu.

Although there is currently no preventive vaccine available for HIV, scientists have been long working to develop one. In fact, this year marks the 27th annual observance of HVAD, which aligns with the anniversary of the first international AIDS vaccine trial, which was initiated in 1997.

On a positive note, people living with HIV today have better access to lifesaving antiretroviral therapy (ART). People living with HIV who maintain an undetectable viral load (also known as viral suppression) do not transmit the virus via sex, a concept known as Undetectable Equals Untransmittable, or U=U. Click here for more info about U=U.

While researchers still work on an HIV vaccine, access to pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a highly effective antiretroviral medication used by HIV-negative people to prevent acquiring the virus, continues to increase.

To educate others about HVAD, the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition (AVAC) is offering a webinar (click on a title to register):

"From the Lab to the Jab: Lessons learned and what's next in HIV vaccine research"
June 3, 2024 @ 9am ET

AVAC's issues briefs and webinar covers the barriers to and solutions for equitable access to vaccines in low- and middle-income countries. During this webinar, an expert panel will discuss lessons learned, an international initiative for vaccine development and how research and access can be improved.

AVAC also released a new episode of its PxPulse podcast: "An HIV Vaccine: Looking into the future with Nina Russell," during which Russell, the director of tuberculosis and HIV research and development for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, talks about the current state of HIV vaccine development, the goals for an HIV vaccine, the necessity of PrEP and more.

To spread the word about HIV Vaccine Awareness Day, use the hashtag #HVAD on social media and follow, like or share content on these channels:

- Facebook: HIV.gov, CDC HIV, @NIAID.NIH
- X: @HIVGov, @CDC_HIV, @NIAIDNews
- Instagram: @HIVgov, @stophivtogether, @NIAID
- LinkedIn: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers sample social media messages for folks to copy, paste and share:

Facebook: Today is HIV Vaccine Awareness Day, a day to recognize the volunteers, community members, and researchers working to find a safe and effective vaccine to prevent HIV. Such a vaccine, along with existing HIV treatment and prevention strategies, would help achieve the goal of ending the HIV epidemic. #HVAD #EndHIVEpidemic

Twitter: Today is HIV Vaccine Awareness Day, a day to recognize the volunteers, community members, and researchers working to find a safe and effective vaccine to prevent #HIV. Such a vaccine, along w/ existing HIV treatment and prevention strategies, would help to #EndHIVEpidemic. #HVAD

Instagram: Today is HIV Vaccine Awareness Day, a day to recognize the volunteers, community members, and researchers working to find a safe and effective vaccine to prevent HIV. Such a vaccine, along with existing HIV treatment and prevention strategies, would help achieve the goal of ending the HIV epidemic. #HVAD #EndHIVEpidemic #HIV

To read more about HIV vaccine research, check out the collection of POZ articles under #HIV Vaccine. You'll find headlines such as "NIH Research Identifies Opportunities to Improve Future HIV Vaccine Candidates," "Last Large HIV Vaccine Trial Halted" and "IAS Calls for Stepping Up HIV Vaccine R&D After PrEPVacc Halts Its Vaccine Arm."

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