Focusing on Nonprofit HIV Research

Florida’s Campbell Foundation funds science and services.

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You’ve heard of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Kaiser Family Foundation, but what about the Campbell Foundation? Since its 1995 launch by HIV-positive chemist Richard Campbell Zahn, who made his fortune developing a lip balm for cold sores, the Campbell Foundation has funded nearly $10 million in HIV research, specializing in grants for ground-floor studies in the nonprofit sector. “With the data they reaped from Campbell Foundation funding, many of our grantees have gone on to get money from Gates or the National Institutes of Health,” says program officer Ken Rapkin. Campbell-funded research has adapted as the epidemic changed, looking into lipodystrophy, comorbidities (such as osteoporosis), drug holidays and, currently, vaccines, stem cells, the brain-blood barrier and neurological issues.

Based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, the foundation also sets aside funds each year to support AIDS service organizations or, like a few years back, to pay for the HIV meds and co-pays of Floridians on ADAP waiting lists. “Our focus is HIV research,” Rapkin explains, “but while scientists are doing their thing, some people are just trying to stay alive.”

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