ViiV's $3.7M COVID-19 Fund Will Support HIV Groups and Researchers

Here's how local community organizations and HIV scientists alike can apply for grants from the HIV health care company.

April 28, 2020 By Trent Straube

HIV company ViiV Healthcare has just launched the Global HIV and COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund. A total of about $3.72 million will be divided equally into two different arms of the fund; one will support scientific research exploring the impact of COVID-19 on people living with HIV, and the other will support community-based HIV organizations so they can continue their work during this new pandemic.

According to a ViiV press release, the Research Emergency Response Fund is currently seeking proposals within three areas of research:

- epidemiology and real-world data
- health care systems management in COVID-19 environments
- biomarkers that indicate disease susceptibility, severity and progression.

"Because COVID-19 is caused by a novel virus, we don't have scientific data to answer some of the important questions that are being raised by people living with HIV and their physicians," said Harmony Garges, ViiV's chief medical officer, in a press release announcing the fund. "Does HIV put a person at greater risk of getting COVID-19? Are people living with HIV more at risk of severe infection? Is the pandemic preventing people with HIV from seeing their health care providers and getting the treatment and care they need? The HIV community at large has asked us for help to immediately start studying these issues, and the Global HIV and COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund has been created to support their efforts."

ViiV's Community Emergency Response Fund will award grants to organizations that offer HIV prevention, care and outreach; the money is not to be used to buy pharmaceutical supplies.

Both funds will award grants through a request for proposal process that is open until May 18 for the research projects and May 15 for community groups. In both cases, the grants will go to existing grantees and funded researchers, for example grantees of ViiV Healthcare's Positive

Action and/or Government Affairs and Global Public Health.

“Our mission is to leave no person living with HIV behind, and in these unprecedented times, it’s more important than ever that we use our resources and expertise to do just that,” ViiV Healthcare CEO Deborah Waterhouse added in the press release. “To contribute to finding solutions, ViiV Healthcare is proud to announce the Global HIV and COVID-19 Emergency Fund. Through this fund, we can support research about the impact of COVID-19 on people living with HIV that is urgently needed. We will also be able to provide support to local community organizations who are grounded in the response to the pandemic and those who have been impacted by COVID-19 to allow them to continue the important work they are doing to support the HIV community. We know their support of the broader health system will help save lives.”

ViiV Healthcare produces 14 antiretroviral meds, including the combination tablets Dovato, Juluca and Triumeq. The company is majority owned by GSK, with Pfizer Inc. and Shionogi Limited as shareholders.

For POZ’s latest roundup of antiretrovirals, check out the 2019 HIV Drug Chart, which can be printed as a PDF. And click here for a list of approved and experimental HIV medications.

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