

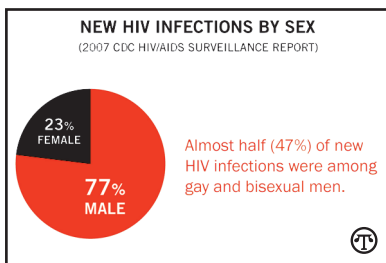
Fighting AIDS

(NAPSA)—Remarkable advances have been made in HIV/AIDS research. Three recent prevention studies highlight the progress and renew the hope for new, more effective biomedical prevention methods. In one study conducted in Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, South Africa, Thailand and the United States, the use of an oral antiretroviral approved as an HIV treatment reduced the risk of acquiring HIV infection by 43.8 percent among HIV-negative men and women. In another study conducted in South Africa, a microbicide gel reduced new HIV infections in women by 39 percent, and a study that tested a vaccine regimen in Thailand showed modest success when it reduced new HIV infections by 31 percent.

All three studies increase optimism that effective biomedical strategies to prevent HIV infection globally among diverse populations will become a future reality. Other recent breakthroughs, which have increased understanding about certain individuals' biological responses to the virus, could also point to new paths of vaccine development. Additional research is now under way or being planned to build upon what has been learned from these studies and improve on the approaches used.

Despite these promising findings and new research directions, UNAIDS estimates that 33.4 million men, women and children around the world are living with HIV/AIDS. About 95 percent of people with HIV/AIDS live in developing nations where treatments are often out of reach due to geography, lack of health care infrastructure or cost. In the U.S., HIV continues to disproportionately affect African-Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, gay and bisexual men and people living in poverty.

While treatments are helping people with the disease live longer and healthier lives, the need for



an HIV vaccine remains critical to our ability to end the epidemic. Research currently in progress in the U.S. and around the world will continue to bring us closer to that goal of finding a preventive vaccine that is safe and effective for all populations.

We are living in an exciting time for HIV/AIDS prevention research; greater community involvement in the field will only speed up the pace of discovery. Collaboration between scientists and affected communities is essential to finding more effective ways to treat and care for people with HIV and to developing a vaccine that will stop HIV transmission.

On World AIDS Day and every day, we look to future discoveries with renewed hope that someday we will be able to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Why Is An HIV Vaccine So Critical?

- Communities around the world continue to be affected by HIV. UNAIDS estimates that 2 million people died of AIDS worldwide in 2008.

- If current infection rates continue, the need for expensive and ongoing HIV treatment will likely increase, leading to costs that could rise as high as \$35 billion annually by the year 2030.

- Historically, vaccines have been the most powerful weapon against viruses, such as polio, measles and hepatitis B.

To learn more about how you can support HIV vaccine research, visit www.bethegeneration.nih.gov.