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**U.S. Army Part of Team to Win HIV Cure Research Grant**  
*NIH funds collaborative research teams to find a cure for HIV*

The U.S. Military HIV Research Program (MHRP) at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research is part of a collaborative research team, or “Collaboratory,” that was awarded funds to develop an integrated approach to finding an HIV cure. This research project brings together some of the leading researchers in the cure field and will help further our understanding of the role of immunity in HIV persistence.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded this program as part of the Martin Delaney Collaboratories for HIV Cure Research initiative. Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) was a primary recipient, and MHRP is one of three teams participating in this collaboration, entitled “Combined Immunologic Approaches to Cure HIV-1.” The Collaboratory will be jointly led by Dr. Dan Barouch at the BIDMC, Dr. John Mellors at the University of Pittsburgh, and Col. Nelson Michael at MHRP.

The researchers plan to intensively study the immune responses generated by therapeutic vaccines, broadly neutralizing antibodies, and latency reversing agents in both acutely infected individuals and also in preclinical studies.

Col. Nelson Michael, MHRP director and co-principal investigator of the study, notes that, “MHRP brings expansive expertise in clinical research for HIV vaccines, acute infection studies and cure studies to this collaboration.” MHRP’s extensive expertise in viral sequencing will also be leveraged for the project.

“This is a wonderful synthesis of the best and brightest minds in our field who bring together diverse capabilities in broad and potent neutralizing antibodies, therapeutic vaccines, and latency reversing agents to bear in relevant clinical studies to explore HIV cure.”

At the center of MHRP’s efforts is a Thai acute infection cohort study, RV254, which is a collaboration with the Thai Red Cross AIDS Research Center to identify acutely infected individuals and place them onto ART immediately. Researchers have found that this very early initiation of ART results in immune restoration and a very small or undetectable reservoir of HIV DNA.

“Through RV254, we have been able to identify more than 350 people found to be acutely infected, and nearly all of them opted to start ART within days of discovering

their status,” said Dr. Jintanat Ananworanich, who is the co-principal investigator for MHRP on the clinical portion of the collaborative project.

The NIH has awarded approximately \$30 million in annual funding over the next five years to six research collaborations working to advance basic medical science toward an HIV cure. The awards comprise the second iteration of the Martin Delaney Collaboratory: Towards an HIV-1 Cure program and are a part of President Barack Obama’s pledge to invest in HIV cure research. The research program is supported by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, all part of the NIH. The BIDMC Collaboratory is one of six groups to win funding for work towards a cure.

This Collaboratory’s five-year award is for \$4.6 million per year. MHRP’s portion is approximately \$900,000 per year. The study sites include BIDMC, University of Pittsburgh, Henry M. Jackson Foundation, the Thai Red Cross, the Scripps Research Institute, the Ragon Institute of Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Harvard University, the Johns Hopkins University, University of KwaZulu-Natal, and the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Industry partners include **Janssen** Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson and Gilead Sciences, Inc.

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**About MHRP:**

The US Military HIV Research Program (MHRP) at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research conducts research to develop an effective HIV vaccine and integrates prevention, treatment, diagnosis and monitoring as part of a global effort to protect troops and reduce the impact of HIV worldwide. MHRP has six clinical research sites in the US, Africa and Asia. The program successfully collaborates on HIV prevention care and treatment services, funded by the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), with African militaries and in the communities where it conducts research. For more information, visit [www.hivresearch.org](http://www.hivresearch.org) or find MHRP on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/hivresearch](https://www.facebook.com/hivresearch), and Twitter at @MHRPInfo.