

World AIDS Day 2017

Few wars are won without allies. The fight to end the HIV epidemic is no exception. To combat a virus so evasive and deadly, governments, institutions and individuals from around the world have combined efforts and resources to make headway against a disease whose impact respects no borders.

The U.S. Military HIV Research Program (MHRP) at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) counts its network of strong, lasting domestic and international partnerships among its most important assets. These partnerships not only enable the collaboration and cooperation required for MHRP to carry out its mission, but also joins our program with countless others devoted to ending HIV in our lifetime.

MHRP is proud to have led a large group that executed the landmark RV144 vaccine trial, the first study to show efficacy in preventing HIV infection. Another collaborative vaccine efficacy trial began last month in South Africa. We can celebrate that for the first time in 9 years two such efficacy studies are being executed simultaneously.

Both of these large-scale studies build upon years of work and bring together numerous private and public partners, including MHRP. This massive global effort to advance a safe, effective vaccine demonstrates that we have not become complacent against a disease that continues to claim 19,000 lives every week.

In addition to the quest for a vaccine, MHRP proudly supports research towards a functional cure, collaborating with researchers worldwide on projects stemming from MHRP's two acute infection cohorts in Africa and Thailand. We also work with partner governments and NGOs to provide HIV prevention and treatment services funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in communities in which we conduct research.

And so, this World AIDS Day, we thank each of the allies who has joined in the fight against this epidemic, especially those volunteers who make this work possible and bring hope to us all. Today is a day to celebrate progress and re-energize for the fight ahead. The war is far from over.

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The views expressed are those of the authors and should not be construed to represent the positions of the U.S. Army or the Department of Defense.