

Today is World AIDS Day

Written by Robert ID2152

Wednesday, 30 November 2005 23:28 -

Ever since March 26, 1995 when legendary Compton businessman, the godfather of gangsta rap, hip-hop and rap record label owner, rap artist and devoted father; Eric 'Eazy E' Wright's life was claimed by the disease – the hip-hop community has been aware of the seriousness of HIV/AIDS.

Today is World AIDS Day. Let us remember those we have lost and do our best to promote HIV/AIDS Research and awareness. This is a global problem and one we all need to look at seriously.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has adopted "Action Makes a Difference" as the theme for this year's World AIDS Day. Today we remember that we all can make a difference in helping to bring an end to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, regardless of our background or expertise. Everyone has a critical role to play, whether as a scientist, clinician, volunteer, policy maker, advocate, student, caregiver, person living with HIV infection, or friend.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has a robust and comprehensive HIV/AIDS research program. The NIH AIDS research effort represents a unique and complex multi-institute, multi-disciplinary, global research program with the ultimate goals of better understanding the basic biology of HIV, developing effective therapies to treat and control HIV disease, and designing interventions to prevent new infections from occurring.

Perhaps no other disease so thoroughly transcends every area of clinical medicine and basic scientific investigation, crossing the boundaries of the NIH Institutes and Centers.

"World AIDS Day provides each of us with an opportunity, collectively, to intensify the commitment to ending the HIV/AIDS pandemic," says NIH Director Elias Zerhouni, M.D.

HIV/AIDS has now touched virtually every country in the world, and continues to destroy health, lives, families and societies. Approximately 40 million people, including more than one million Americans, are living with HIV/AIDS. In 2005 alone, AIDS caused the deaths of approximately 3.1 million people worldwide, and about 5 million additional people became infected with HIV.

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A key component of the trans-NIH effort is the development of a safe and effective HIV vaccine. “This crucial tool of prevention has thus far been elusive, but with ongoing research and collaborations and clinical trials of promising vaccine candidates, researchers are moving closer to this “holy grail” of HIV/AIDS prevention,” notes Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Researchers also are breaking new ground in developing and evaluating new therapies for HIV and its complications. Clinical studies are helping to identify which new agents are effective against HIV and its associated complications and also to clarify how best to use these drugs.

Scientists continue to make important progress in developing other prevention methods such as topical microbicides to prevent HIV transmission. Topical microbicides are creams, gels or other substances designed to allow women protect themselves against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Jack Whitescarver, Ph.D., director of the NIH Office of AIDS Research, says, “Microbicides may be a critical component of future prevention strategies, especially in settings where it may be extremely difficult for women to insist on condom use or otherwise protect themselves from infection.”

The NIH commends the many heroes who have dedicated their lives to slowing the onslaught of HIV/AIDS, and remains optimistic that together we will find new and better drugs to help those already infected, and the tools to prevent future infections.

The Office of the Director, the central office at NIH, is responsible for setting policy for NIH, which includes 27 Institutes and Centers. This involves planning, managing, and coordinating the programs and activities of all NIH components. The Office of the Director also includes program offices which are responsible for stimulating specific areas of research throughout NIH. Additional information is available at <http://www.nih.gov/icd/od/> .

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) — The Nation's Medical Research Agency — is a component of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit <http://www.nih.gov> .

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