AIDS Researchers at amfAR Channel Expertise to Fight COVID-19

Here's how you can help. But don't worry, funds are not diverted from the nonprofit's efforts to cure HIV.

April 8, 2020 By Trent Straube

The team of scientists at amfAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research, are directing their unique skills to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, the potentially fatal respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus.

"In this global health emergency, it's all hands on deck," writes amfAR CEO Kevin Robert Frost in an announcement. "As leaders in infectious disease research, we have a responsibility to do our part and to utilize the experience and expertise we have acquired over 35 years of funding the most innovative and creative research on HIV/AIDS. So in this time of crisis, we are expanding our efforts to include research on the deadly new coronavirus and have established the amfAR Fund to Fight COVID-19 for that purpose."

Frost stresses that AIDS research—specifically efforts to find a cure for HIV—remains the foundation's focus and that no funds will be diverted from its HIV work. Instead, people can donate to a special fund set up for COVID-19 research. (Below is an an amfAR video highlighting its work to find an HIV cure.)

Not that HIV and the new coronavirus don't intersect. "People living with HIV are at particular risk from COVID-19," Frost explains. "So where these epidemics overlap and intersect, we will be especially attuned to making sure that we are funding cutting-edge research that targets this intersection."

He notes that amfAR researchers and grantees have honed vital skill sets and knowledge that could be targeted to the COVID-19 battle. For example, one of amfAR's grantees was working on a test for the novel coronavirus before health leaders warned it would sweep across the United States.

For more about this intersection, see "How Do COVID-19 Fears Affect People Living With HIV? Watch two AIDS experts discuss the links between COVID-19 and HIV—including hydroxychloroquine."

The website for amfAR now includes a COVID-19 page that not only accepts donations but also acts as a clearinghouse of information, research and resources related to the overlap of HIV and COVID-19, including a video exploring the intersection of HIV, COVID-19 and hydroxychloroquine and another examining the related issues of testing for coronavirus and HIV.

To read about recent amfAR grants funding HIV cure research, see "Can One of These 'Trojan Horses' Help Cure HIV?" and "Two Scientists Awarded $150 Each for HIV Vaccine and Cure Research: They're the 2019 recipients of amfAR's Mathilde Krim Fellowship in Basic Biomedical Research."

Keep in mind that novel coronavirus guidance and concerns for unique populations may vary. For example, see "3 Reasons COVID-19 Poses a Higher Risk for the LGBTQ Population," "UPDATED: What People With HIV Need to Know About the New Coronavirus" and the similar article for people with cancer.

Go to poz.com/tag/coronavirus for our continuing coverage of COVID-19.

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