

20 September 2010

Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, M.D.  
Director  
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases  
National Institutes of Health  
31 Center Drive, Building 31, Room 7A03  
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Fauci:

The many complications and comorbidities faced by the aging population of HIV-positive people in the United States constitute a rapidly growing medical crisis that has been woefully neglected by U.S. research efforts. According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than half of all HIV-positive Americans will be over the age of 50 by or before the year 2015. Although increasing evidence points to an earlier onset of age-related conditions in people living with HIV little is known about pathogenesis, or proper methods to screen for, prevent and manage these conditions, or anticipate the infrastructure needed to deliver care and treatment for people suffering from these conditions.

We, the undersigned organizations, advocates, and people living with HIV, fear a reversal of recent scientific gains made against HIV may occur if this emergency is not immediately elevated to a top research priority by the NIAID and other NIH institutes and centers. We are extremely concerned that NIAID's current research priorities underplay the potential long-term health impact of dysregulated T cell homeostasis in people with HIV, which in many cases is not addressed by ART-mediated viral suppression. We expect an increase in morbidity and mortality for people living long-term with HIV, particularly those who started antiretroviral therapy with a CD4 nadir below the threshold at which initiation of antiretroviral therapy is recommended—which includes almost everyone in resource-poor settings—and people with additional risk factors, regardless of chronological age.

The complex interactions between HIV infection, premature aging, immune dysregulation, long-term drug toxicities, coinfections, and comorbidities in various organ systems pose an unprecedented research challenge. This challenge can only be met through a coordinated, multi-disciplinary collaboration across research institutes, which has yet to be created. For example, the “Medical Management of Older Patients with HIV/AIDS” Program Announcement released in 2008 has yielded only three grants to date, totaling less than 1.5 million dollars in funding. Unless adequate funding is set aside, and an appropriate grant review process is in place, desperately needed research on HIV and aging will not occur. A business-as-usual approach to research will not work; this issue is urgent.

We urge the NIAID to immediately:

- Provide the necessary leadership to create a new funding initiative on HIV and aging, in partnership with other relevant Institutes and Centers within NIH. This initiative will identify existing funding that can be set aside for RFAs and RFPs starting in FY 2011, and include significant and long-term funding increases for HIV and aging research in the FY 2012 budget request to Congress;
- Issue a Request for Information and Ideas (RFI) and rapidly establish a special review panel on HIV and aging with reviewers that have expertise across all relevant disciplines in order to streamline the grant making process;
- Identify HIV and aging as a new and distinct future HIV/AIDS therapeutics research priority area for the upcoming network restructuring process;
- Establish one or more large-scale, well-characterized longitudinal cohort of people with HIV with matching HIV-negative controls, and seek out innovative approaches to assess AIDS and aging-related issues from within existing clinical trials networks, existing cohorts, collaborative groups, and Phase IV post-marketing trials to help develop and standardize biomarkers, and characterize relevant AIDS and aging events;
- Create a new aging working group within the AACTG, similar to the one created for lipodystrophy more than a decade ago, to spur new studies on badly needed interventions and preventive measures for aging related complications;
- Ensure cohorts of perinatally infected children are supported to investigate the incidence of, and risk factors for, aging-associated diseases. Furthermore, mandate coordination with the AACTG and INSIGHT networks to study therapeutic and preventive interventions in this unique population.

Lastly, we call on NIAID, along with the other institutes and centers, and in collaboration with the Office of AIDS Research, to immediately commit significant financial and organizational resources to develop a detailed and long-term research plan on HIV and aging. We insist upon full and immediate community participation in all stages of planning for this research, utilizing the experience, knowledge and commitment of HIV/AIDS community activists.

We hereby firmly request a meeting between the representatives of the Coalition for HIV and Aging Research and Policy Advocacy (CHARPA) and the leadership at NIAID, OAR, DAIDS, and all other relevant ICs to discuss the immediate course change in HIV and aging research at the NIH. Please contact CHARPA representative Lei Chou at 212-253-7922 ext.215 or [lei.chou@treatmentactiongroup.org](mailto:lei.chou@treatmentactiongroup.org) to coordinate this meeting.

Sincerely,

Coalition for HIV and Aging Research and Policy Advocacy (CHARPA)

### 113 Organizational Signatories:

2 God The Glory Women Supportive Housing Program  
African Services Committee  
AIDS Action Baltimore, Inc.  
AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts  
AIDS Alliance for Faith and Health  
AIDS Community Research Initiative of America  
AIDS Education Global Information System - AEGIS  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
AIDS Legal Referral Panel  
AIDS Policy Project  
AIDS Project Los Angeles  
AIDS Services for the Monadnock Region  
AIDS Services of Dallas  
AIDS-Related Community Services  
AIDS/HIV Health Alternatives  
Alliance Against AIDS  
Alliance For Hope  
Allies Linked for the Prevention of HIV and AIDS (a.l.p.h.a.)  
American Social Health Association  
Aniz Inc  
association el hayet des pvih  
Association of Nutrition Services Agencies (ANSA)  
Back to the Basics Please, Inc  
Bailey House  
Balm In Gilead, Inc.  
Beacons of H.O.P.E.  
Bolivian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS  
Boulder County AIDS Project  
Care Resource  
Case Western Reserve/University Hospitals of Cleveland AIDS Clinical  
Trials Unit Community Advisory Board  
Center For Health, Identity, Behavior & Prevention Studies, The  
Steinhardt School, New York University  
Central Illinois HIV Care Connect  
Child Health And Social Ecology  
Colorado AIDS Project  
Common Ground - the Westside HIV Community Center  
Community Access National Network - CANN  
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP)  
Community Information Center  
Copasetic Women Over 50 Inc.  
Dab the AIDS Bear Project  
Delhi Network of Positive People  
Dunshee House (home of seattle AIDS support group)  
End AIDS Now  
European AIDS Treatment Group  
European Community Advisory Board (ECAB/EATG)  
Fan Free Clinic  
Florida Keys HIV Community Planning Partnership  
Foundation for Integrative AIDS Research (FIAR)  
Greater Love Tabernacle-HIV Services  
Greenwich House, INC., PCI Program  
Guardian Health Association, Inc.  
He Intends Victory  
Health GAP  
Hema Universal Life Community services  
HIV and Hepatitis.com  
HIV Dental Alliance (HIVDent)  
HIV Program Hennepin County Medical Center  
HIV/AIDS Law Project  
HIV/AIDS Services for African Americans in Alaska  
HIVictorious, Inc.  
Impaact community advisory board, cape town, south africa  
International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW)  
Zambia  
International Foundation for Alternative Research in AIDS (IFARA)  
Intersect Worldwide  
J-CAP  
Latino Commission on AIDS  
LifeLinc  
LIGHT Health & Wellness Comprehensive Services, Inc.  
Long Island Minority AIDS Coalition  
Massmer Associates LLC  
McClernon LLC  
MCCNY Charities  
Misbah  
Moveable Feast  
National AIDS Treatment Advocacy Project - NATAP  
National Association of People with AIDS  
National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research, University  
of New South Wales, Sydney Australia  
New Destiny Recovery Ministry, Inc  
New Jersey Association on HIV Over Fifty  
New Mexico AIDS Services  
Nightsweats & T-cells, Co  
NYC AIDS Housing Network (NYCAHN) / Voices Of Community  
Activists & Leaders (VOCAL)  
Okaloosa AIDS Support and Informational Services, Inc (OASIS)  
Older Women Embracing Life (OWEL)  
Out With Cancer - The LGBT Cancer Project  
Pacientes de SIDA pro Politica Sana  
Peoples Alliance To Combat HIV/AIDS  
PeterCares House  
Positive Opportunities, Inc.  
Project Inform  
Proyecto So Filadelfia  
PVA-Genève  
REDCA+  
San Diego POZabilities  
San Francisco HIV Health Services Planning Council  
Servicios de la Raza  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)  
Shanti  
Silent Partner  
South Central Educational Development, Inc  
STOP AIDS Project  
Test Positive Aware Network/Positively Aware Magazine  
Total Health Awareness Team  
Transexuales y Transgeneros en Marcha  
Treatment Action Group  
Treatment Education Network  
UMC AIDS Ministry of West Ohio Conference  
Uncle Rock's Place  
UNIV.FLA.JAX.  
Victoria AIDS Resource & Community Service Society  
Wayne State University Community Advisory Board  
Women Together for Change  
Zephyr L.T.N.P. Foundation, Inc.

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