

# HHS NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases today announced a new program to coordinate NIAID-supported research on AIDS, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.

In making the announcement, Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, NIAID Director said, "The institute's AIDS research activities have increased rapidly in the five years since the syndrome was first recognized. By marshalling our resources under this program, we can accelerate progress in finding ways of preventing and treating AIDS."

AIDS, which has been diagnosed in more than 16,000 Americans since 1981, has become a worldwide problem. There is no effective treatment, and most of its victims die within two years of diagnosis.

NIAID is heavily involved in research on AIDS, both at the institute's laboratories in Bethesda, and through grant and contract support of scientific projects throughout the United States and in some foreign countries. The newly established Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome Program will set priorities for NIAID-supported AIDS research and ensure maximum utilization of funds and other resources. Establishment of the new program will also enhance coordination of all aspects of NIAID's research efforts on AIDS.

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Dr. Fauci, who is also coordinator of AIDS research for the entire National Institutes of Health, said, "This program is an important new element in the federal government's concerted response to one of the most baffling and deadly medical challenges of the modern era. In a complex and rapidly developing field like AIDS research, we must have the capacity to respond creatively and flexibly to emerging needs."

NIAID's current research efforts are focused primarily on the search for effective treatment methods, including evaluation of treatment strategies in patients, and the development of an AIDS vaccine. Important to the achievement of these goals are basic laboratory studies of the virus that causes AIDS, and research on the immune disorder seen in persons with AIDS.

Scientists are investigating the mechanisms and patterns of virus transmission from person to person, and are tracing the development of the disease in individual patients. A crucial step in vaccine development is the establishment of AIDS or AIDS-like disease in laboratory animals. Animal models are also needed for the evaluation of drugs and other treatment approaches.

The new AIDS program will direct and manage research grants, contracts and related training in these areas and others. Identification of new and continuing research needs will be aided by close coordination with other government agencies, including other institutes at NIH, as well as professional and voluntary health organizations.

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