



Advocacy to accelerate ethical research & global delivery of AIDS vaccines

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Contact: Deirdre Grant, +1-212-367-1021, deirdre@avac.org

AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition warns that lack of future-oriented planning could slow the pace of AIDS prevention research

Report Focuses on Need to Plan for Different Scenarios, Multiple Methods of Prevention

New York, NY, September 14, 2006 – The AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition (AVAC) today released its annual report, *AIDS Vaccines: The Next Frontiers*, which warns that a lack of future-oriented planning could slow the pace of AIDS prevention research.

“Planning for different scenarios for AIDS prevention at this stage is essential,” said Mitchell Warren, executive director of AVAC. “Without adequate planning and coordination, the issues which will emerge as one or more interventions show some signs of efficacy could slow the pace of future studies. And we must simultaneously lay the groundwork now to ensure new prevention methods reach the people who need them most.”

At last month’s International AIDS Conference in Toronto, new prevention technologies made the headlines, with speakers including Bill and Melinda Gates and Bill Clinton making forceful calls for investments in new technologies including AIDS vaccines and microbicides. *AIDS Vaccines: The Next Frontiers* details the critical steps needed to ensure that these ambitions become a reality, in a field that is as complex and active as it has ever been.

The Next Frontiers maps the issues, challenges and steps needed to ensure that research on vaccines and other new prevention technologies proceeds swiftly around the world. It contains four provocative future scenarios, describing what the world might look like in five, six or ten years’ time.

“Each new research finding means new choices, and new potential points of convergence. Collaboration among trial planners, public health program designers, and communities is essential,” said Michael Powell, Ph.D., AVAC Board President and general partner of Sofinnova Ventures. “Among the issues we need to be discussing are what new prevention methods will be incorporated into vaccine trials and how this will affect study design. In addition, the various prevention constituencies will need to work together to help expedite delivery of multiple new technologies.”

The report considers the implications of the ever-expanding field of prevention research, and asks the question: What do we need to do now to plan for the next two to five years when we will see results from two large vaccine efficacy studies, several microbicide efficacy trials, as well as studies of male circumcision, treatment of herpes simplex virus type 2 to prevent HIV transmission or acquisition, pre-exposure prophylaxis and the female diaphragm?

Key features of the report include:

- *AIDS Vaccine Science, Strategy and Action* provides an update on the state of AIDS vaccine science, science management and funding, including an analysis of the Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise and its ongoing search for an executive director; and of the new Enterprise-related funding streams which emerged over the last year.
- *Reports from the Frontlines* analyzes successes and new challenges in the conduct of AIDS prevention clinical trials and concludes that a consensus on “good community practice” is long overdue. In the next year, AVAC commits to playing an active role in developing a draft set of “GCP” guidelines that could help the scientific community and communities in the field ensure that every trial that is initiated meets agreed-upon criteria for substantive and sustainable engagement with the issues.
- *The Emerging Adolescent Agenda* explores why licensure of the new vaccine against human papillomavirus (HPV) and cervical cancer presents the AIDS vaccine field with new opportunities. AVAC calls on the field to advocate for international and national financing commitments to ensure widespread access to the vaccine in resource-poor settings; document and learn from HPV vaccine experiences with clinical trials and pilot introduction programs among adolescents; and collaborate on advocacy and communication campaigns at every level.
- *AIDS Prevention Research Evolves (Again)* outlines why the next few years will bring developments that make AIDS vaccine research more complicated—though no less necessary.

“In just a few years time, the context for conducting prevention trials may be dramatically different from what it is today,” said Warren. “But one thing is certain: there will still be a need for a safe, effective and affordable AIDS vaccine as an element of a comprehensive prevention package.”

AIDS Vaccines: The Next Frontiers is available online at <http://www.avac.org/reports.htm>.

About AVAC

Founded in 1995, the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition (AVAC) is a non-profit, community- and consumer-based organization that uses public education, policy analysis, advocacy and community mobilization to accelerate the ethical development and global delivery of vaccines against HIV/AIDS. For more information, visit www.avac.org.

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