For more on the state of HIV vaccine research and advocacy, please visit: www.avac.org/hvad

An effective HIV vaccine—together with expanded delivery of HIV prevention, treatment and care—is the cornerstone of efforts to end the global HIV epidemic.

- Even with highly effective treatment, and proven prevention methods such as the HIV prevention pill PrEP, an estimated 1.8 million people around the world still became newly infected with HIV in 2017.
- In many parts of the world, HIV infection rates—especially amongst vulnerable and marginalized populations—are actually rising rather than falling.
- In the United States, a government pledge to end the domestic epidemic must confront the reality of an HIV infection rate unchanged since 2013.
- A vaccine is needed to further bring down the rate of new infections, and eventually end the HIV epidemic.

We are in a period of unprecedented progress – a golden age – in vaccine research.

- For the first time since the HIV/AIDS epidemic began over 30 years ago, two large-scale HIV vaccine efficacy trials are underway at the same time, with a third to start later this year.
  - The Uhambo efficacy trial (HVTN 702), in South Africa, is currently testing a vaccine designed to prevent HIV clade C, the most common type of HIV in Southern Africa.
  - The Imbokodo trial (HPX2008/HVTN 705), currently taking place in five countries in sub-Saharan Africa, is testing whether a so-called “mosaic-based vaccine regimen” will protect against HIV infection. The goal of the mosaic vaccine approach is to protect against multiple strains of HIV. An additional Phase 3 efficacy study for this vaccine regimen is also being planned.
  - PrEPVacc is designed to test two vaccine regimens and compare a new oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) agent to standard PrEP. The trial will take place in four African countries and the first participant is expected to be enrolled in early 2020.
- This golden age of vaccines is not limited to HIV.
  - Infants in three African countries will soon receive a new vaccine designed to reduce malaria.
  - Given recent promising results, a vaccine to prevent pulmonary tuberculosis in adults may soon advance to a large-scale licensure trial.
  - An experimental Ebola vaccine is being deployed with urgency to stop an outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Innovative partnerships among researchers, communities and funders are growing. They are essential to progress in HIV vaccine research.

- The Uhambo efficacy trial is conducted through a partnership between the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), the HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN), the US Military’s HIV Research Program (MHRP), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the South African Medical Research Council and the pharmaceutical companies Sanofi Pasteur and GSK.

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1 UNAIDS, 2018
The Imbokodo trial is led by the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson and the HVTN, in partnership with the NIH, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, USAMMDA (U.S. Army Medical Materiel Development Activity) and the Ragon Institute.

PrEPVacc is led by African researchers who oversee the trial database, trial management, and primary laboratory assays; supported by European and American partners; and funded by the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership with support from USAID, United Kingdom Research & Innovation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Other partnerships are pushing forward studies to improve understanding of the immune system, develop new vaccine candidates and conduct groundbreaking research in the field of broadly neutralizing antibodies, or bNAbs. See updates on the bNAb pipeline here and here.

The rising global tide of anti-vaccine misinformation threatens the unprecedented public health advances of current vaccines — with potentially deadly results.

- Misinformation about vaccines could undo decades of progress in public health.
- The anti-vaccine sentiment is not only misinformed but also dangerous. It has caused drops in vaccine uptake, leading to outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, like measles.
- We cannot allow misinformation to erode the broad support needed to sustain vaccine research.

Now is the time to leverage the unprecedented progress in HIV vaccine research, development and testing to rebuild a vital component of public health — faith in and support for vaccines.

- This HIV Vaccine Awareness Day, it’s time for a new global commitment to vaccine research, development and delivery.
- Vaccines save lives today, and a new generation of vaccines will save even more lives tomorrow.

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About AVAC | AVAC is a non-profit organization that uses education, policy analysis, advocacy and a network of global collaborations to accelerate the ethical development and global delivery of new HIV prevention options as part of a comprehensive response to the pandemic.

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