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## **Scientists and Communities Make Advances in AIDS Vaccine Research**

*This just in from NIAID HIV Vaccine Research Education Initiative (NHVREI)*

Scientists continue to make progress in the quest for a safe and effective vaccine to prevent HIV/AIDS. Such progress would not have been possible without the help of tens of thousands of volunteers from all corners of the globe who have literally rolled up their sleeves to become clinical trial volunteers in support of HIV vaccine research.

The need for a vaccine remains critical. An estimated 1.2 million Americans are living with HIV/AIDS. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), some 56,300 individuals in the United States become newly infected every year.

African-Americans account for almost half of these new infections, Hispanics for 18 percent. While advancements in antiretroviral drug therapies are prolonging the lives of HIV/AIDS patients, they remain prohibitively expensive for many, making the discovery of an HIV vaccine our best hope for ending the spread of the virus

In 2009, HIV prevention research received positive news when a 16,000-person vaccine trial in Thailand showed a vaccine regimen was modestly effective in protecting some of the trial participants from contracting HIV. While this vaccine is not considered effective enough for licensure, the data gleaned from the multi-year trial has been invaluable, illuminating the path toward future discoveries in HIV vaccine research. HIV vaccine candidates do not contain the HIV virus, so they cannot infect trial volunteers. HIV vaccine trials are monitored not only by scientists and researchers, but also by community advisory boards made up of local prevention experts and regular citizens who ensure that the safety and well-being of study participants is always the top priority.

Historically, the development of vaccines has taken decades. It took scientists 42 years to develop a measles vaccine and 47 years to develop one for polio; the typhoid vaccine required more than a century of research and testing. Today, those vaccines are protecting and saving millions of lives around the world.

To learn more about HIV vaccine research in the United States, visit <http://betheneration.nih.gov>.