In the United States, the HIV epidemic is growing, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Some 50,000 new infections occur each year, it reports. Although no safe and effective cure for AIDS exists, antiretroviral therapy (ART) “can dramatically prolong the lives of many people infected with HIV and lower their chance of infecting others,” the agency notes.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis or “PrEP”—a preventive measure, not a vaccine—is now available for people who are at high risk of being exposed to HIV. The goal “is to prevent HIV infection from taking hold,” according to the CDC. PrEP involves consistent use of a daily medication called Truvada and other prevention options such as condoms. Truvada, a Gilead Sciences drug, was approved in 2012 but “has been slow to catch on,” the New York Times reported in December 2013.

One reason testing is key is that many people are unaware that they are infected with HIV and can unknowingly spread the virus to others, says the AIDS Institute, a national nonprofit. The combination of a new US Preventive Services Task Force recommendation that strongly supports routine HIV testing, together with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), “has for the most part removed the cost barrier to HIV testing,” particularly routine testing, the institute’s Carl Schmid explained in a press release.

The Obama administration released its National HIV/AIDS Strategy in July 2010. Three years later it launched its National HIV/AIDS Strategy in 2010. In December 2013 the Office of National AIDS Policy released a report containing the HIV Care Continuum Working Group’s initial recommendations and action steps, as well as examples of local efforts and public-private partnerships that are effectively using data to make improvements along the continuum. The National HIV/AIDS Strategy “necessarily focuses on those groups with the greatest number of new HIV infections each year,” the report noted. Gay and bisexual men accounted for 50 percent or more of HIV diagnoses in most states in 2011. Also, ongoing implementation of the ACA, including Medicaid expansion and more access to affordable private insurance, will help the HIV/AIDS strategy succeed.

Here is a small sample of what foundations have funded to try to reduce the number of people in the United States with HIV/AIDS or to inform the public about the epidemic. Sarah Hamilton of Funders Concerned About AIDS noted that in 2012 the majority of philanthropic funding for domestic HIV/AIDS projects was from corporate foundations, corporate-giving programs, and public charities.

Selected Projects

The Ford Foundation focuses its AIDS work on reducing discrimination against, and exclusion of, people with HIV/AIDS. Its goal is to protect and advance their rights. Ford funds both in the United States and other countries. In 2013, for example, the foundation awarded $1.85 million to AIDS United (the group resulting from the merger of the National AIDS Fund and AIDS Action). The grantee, in turn, awarded funding, through its Southern REACH initiative, to thirty-one community-based groups in the southern United States for programs that aim “to achieve social change, shape responsible HIV/AIDS public policy, and/or respond to the underlying legal, political, and systemic barriers contributing to disproportionate rates of HIV/AIDS” in this region, said a March 2013 press release.

Other Ford grants include $200,000 in continuing funding to Duke University School of Law’s AIDS Legal Project to develop recommendations for implementing the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (mentioned above) in areas of the southeastern United States most affected by the epidemic; collect data on HIV/AIDS; monitor use of CDC funds to decrease mortality in minority areas of six southern states; and research better treatments for people with HIV/AIDS.

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) works on both the global and US fronts of the HIV epidemic. Examples of its domestic work include the January 19, 2014, “National Watch Party and Twitter Chat” with Grammy Award-winning singer Alicia Keys. Streamed on VHL.com, the event featured Keys interviewing five women living with HIV/AIDS from around the country. The topic was women and HIV/AIDS in America. The KFF notes that among women, those of color account for most new HIV infections occurring in the United States. Keys cohosted the event with Greater Than AIDS, which was launched by the KFF and the Black AIDS Institute as a national public information response to the US epidemic. (Funders of Greater Than AIDS include the KFF, the Ford Foundation, the CDC, the Elton John AIDS Foundation, and others.)

In January 2014, in conjunction with CDC researchers, the KFF published an issue brief by Jennifer Kates and coauthors, “Assessing the Impact of the Affordable Care Act on Health Insurance Coverage of People with HIV.” The brief includes the “first national estimates” of the expected effect of the ACA’s coverage expansions on those in this population who are receiving medical care, the KFF says.
The KFF and the Black AIDS Institute developed a web portal called ObamaCare & You to help people with HIV understand the ACA. “People with HIV could be among those who make the greatest gains in coverage” under the ACA, the foundation notes. The portal, funded by Gilead Sciences and the KFF, launched in November 2013. It includes a section containing frequently asked questions and a tailored guide to essential health benefits—the minimum set of benefits that qualified health plans must cover—under the ACA. The portal will be updated periodically.

The MoA&C AIDS Fund, the philanthropic arm of Estée Lauder–owned MoA&C Cosmetics, has invested $4 million in AIDS United’s Retention in Care initiative. This multiyear partnership addresses the “substantial social and structural barriers” that prevent HIV-positive people from staying in consistent care, said an AIDS United press release. Citing CDC data, the organization says that only 41 percent of such individuals in the United States are retained in care. Treatment is effective not only in prolonging the lives of those infected with HIV but also “in substantially reducing transmission of new infections.”

In early 2013 AIDS United regranted $1 million of the $4 million total to seven organizations across the United States. Among the grantees was the University of Virginia. Its grant is for an “innovative” model using a smartphone app and a “virtual community” to try to keep people in the most rural areas of Virginia in treatment.

The Merck Foundation’s HIV Care Collaborative for Underserved Populations in the United States, described in more depth in GrantWatch Blog (August 9, 2012), awarded grants to the local health departments in Atlanta, Georgia; Houston, Texas; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This three-year, $3 million initiative aims to connect more people living with HIV, especially the underserved, with “the care they need to stay healthy,” according to the foundation’s website. George Washington University’s School of Public Health and Health Services serves as the collaborative’s national program office, under separate funding. The university is conducting a cross-site evaluation to measure patient participation, quality of care, treatment outcomes, and more.

Since its founding in 1989, the New York City AIDS Fund, a “collaborative fund” of the New York Community Trust, has awarded more than $20 million in grants addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the city. The fund’s lead support has come from the Council of Fashion Designers of America. Other current funding partners include the trust, which is a large community foundation; the MoA&C AIDS Fund; and the Paul Rapoport Foundation. By convening grantmakers to pool knowledge and share resources, a collaborative fund aims to make “a bigger impact on complex problems,” according to the trust’s website.

The AIDS Fund’s advisory committee evaluates the epidemic’s status in the city and “helps analyze the availability of government funding in order to determine where private funding is most needed and can have the greatest effect,” the website explains. The AIDS Fund has increased private funding to fight HIV/AIDS at the community level and to improve “coordination and targeting” of resources in the city. In 2013 the AIDS Fund held two invitation-only educational sessions on health reform. The first in the series was an overview of reform; the second discussed the role of community-based organizations in managed care.

### Tracking Funders

In December 2013 Funders Concerned About AIDS released Global Philanthropic Support to Address HIV/AIDS in 2012. Funded by UNAIDS and based mostly on surveys, the report found that total worldwide AIDS philanthropy by funders based in the United States and European Union countries decreased by 5 percent from 2011’s amount. Even funding by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, “the world’s largest HIV/AIDS philanthropic funder,” decreased, according to a press release. Although philanthropic aid to low- and middle-income countries was only about 5 percent of all international funding responding to the AIDS crisis in such countries, that aid has an important role, the release said. It “is often committed to addressing critical issues through advocacy and to supporting key populations such as men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, and sex workers,” who often are not covered by other funders.

Also, according to the Funders Concerned About AIDS report, 90 percent of respondents whose work focuses on eradicating the pandemic in the United States said that their grant-making approaches align with the National HIV/AIDS Strategy. “Funders are also supporting research, convenings, and technical assistance” to help their grantees get ready for the ACA, the report says.

### Key Personnel Changes

**ROBIN KOVAL** became the new president and CEO of Legacy (formerly called the American Legacy Foundation) in November 2013. She most recently served as CEO of Publicis Kaplan Thaler, a leading advertising firm. Legacy resulted from the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement, “reached between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry,” a press release said. Koval succeeds Cheryl Healon, who directs New York University’s Global Institute of Public Health.

**DON MOULDS** is the Commonwealth Fund’s new executive vice president for programs. He is the former acting assistant secretary for planning and evaluation at the Department of Health and Human Services. Moulds succeeds **Tony Shih**, who becomes executive vice president of the New York Academy of Medicine in March 2014.

**DARREN WALKER** is the new president of the Ford Foundation, the second-largest philanthropy in the United States, according to its website. Previously the foundation’s vice president for Education, Creativity, and Free Expression, he began his new position in September 2013. Walker succeeds **Luis Ubiñas**, who stepped down after almost six years as Ford’s leader.