

# BE THE GENERATION

TO END THE AIDS EPIDEMIC

**BTG News**

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## From the Editor

Happy Pride Month! Pride is always a such a striking reminder of how far we've come—and how far we have yet to go. For those of us who grew up in a time and place where being part of the LGBTQ+ community meant living in fear and isolation, it can be overwhelmingly joyful to show up at a Pride event in 2019 with thousands of people celebrating from all walks of life. But we have yet to achieve equitable justice. We know that gay and bisexual men and transgender people of color still bear the greatest burden of HIV despite representing only a small percentage of the overall population. HIV prevention research has brought us so far, but clearly, these advancements are not enough. There are still about 35,000 new HIV cases every year in the US, most of which are among the same marginalized and disenfranchised groups. This is why we do the work that we do—to Be the Generation to end this epidemic.

In this issue of BTG News, we bring you updates from the HIV Prevention Trials Network, HIV Vaccine Trials Network, Microbicide Trials Network, and Office of HIV/AIDS Network Coordination. These research teams are doing amazing work, and they need you! There is only one way we will end this epidemic: together. So keep sharing our [website](#) and [newsletter](#), stay in touch on [Facebook](#), and be *proud* of all you do to **Be the Generation** to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

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The Legacy Project

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### **HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN)**

The HPTN Annual Meeting will be held at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, D.C. from June 1-5, 2019. More than 500 investigators, research staff, and community members from US and international research sites are expected to attend. Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), will deliver a special keynote regarding NIAID's HIV/AIDS research priorities. Other presenters will discuss the latest developments and research approaches critical to the HPTN's research portfolio. The Annual Meeting also includes sessions organized by the HPTN's Laboratory Center, Statistical and Data Management Center, Scholars, and Community Working Group. For more information, visit the [meeting webpage](#).

### **HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN)**

Dr. Michele Andrasik, Director of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Community Engagement at the HVTN, was interviewed for an article in TheBodyPro, "[Making Trans Women Count in HIV Vaccine Trials](#)." Our friend, Carmarion D. Anderson, Executive Director of Black Transwomen, Inc. also shares her thoughts in the article. Andrasik and Anderson describe many of the social and structural factors that make transgender women—particularly trans women of color in the US South—vulnerable to HIV. While the rates of *cisgender* Black and Latinx participants in HIV vaccine trials have increased over the past decade or so, the participation of Black transgender women in these studies remains very low. "The mistrust is killing my sisters," says Anderson. [Read on](#) to learn more.

### **Microbicide Trials Network (MTN)**

Is a rectal microbicide for HIV prevention in our future? MTN is excited to share the news that the US sites for MTN-035, fondly called the [DESIRE study](#), have enrolled their first participants. DESIRE is exploring three placebo methods for the delivery of a rectal microbicide – a douche, a suppository and a fast-dissolving rectal insert – in 210 transgender men and women and cisgender men who have sex with men from Malawi, Peru, South Africa, Thailand and the US (Birmingham, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco). We look forward to the international sites launching soon.

In conjunction with the launch of the study, MTN presented a scientific poster about DESIRE in April at the National Transgender Health Summit in Oakland. The

poster was presented on behalf of the MTN by Al Liu, Clinical Research Director at Bridge HIV, San Francisco Department of Health.



Al Liu (right), presenting the DESIRE study poster on behalf of the MTN at the 2019 National Transgender Health Summit. Brian Minalga (left) from **Be the Generation** paid a high-heeled visit!

In March, the MTN held stakeholder consultations in Johannesburg, South Africa and Blantyre, Malawi on two HIV prevention studies currently being planned – [DELIVER \(MTN-042\)](#), for pregnant women, and [B-PROTECTED \(MTN-043\)](#), for women who are breastfeeding. The meetings provided stakeholders with the opportunity to share their views about the studies before their anticipated start later this year or in early 2020. The DELIVER and B-PROTECTED studies plan to evaluate the safety of two HIV prevention methods – the monthly dapivirine vaginal ring and daily use of Truvada as PrEP.

MTN Principal Investigator, Dr. Sharon Hillier, was selected as the [2019 Pittsburgh Women Who Rock](#) Award recipient for her work to empower women with agency over their bodies, health, and safety. She was honored at a concert in Pittsburgh on May 30 featuring the performer Sheila E.



Gcobisa Madlolo, winner of the Omololu Falobi Award at the 2018 HIV Research for Prevention meeting, holding the dapivirine vaginal ring at a stakeholder meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, on MTN's DELIVER and B-PROTECTED studies.

In an announcement about the award, Dr. Hillier said, “Women and girls need tools and methods that are under their control to stay healthy throughout their lives. Across the globe, women and girls have told us that being able to protect themselves from HIV and other STIs would be empowering, and that having a choice of products that they could use would be especially empowering. As women, we want and deserve to have control of our health, our lives, and our destinies.”

### **Office of HIV/AIDS Network Coordination (HANC)**

Check out HANC's latest webinar recordings on a variety of interesting topics:

- [National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#)
- [Without Our Consent: Centering People Living with HIV in HIV Genetic Sequencing \(Part 1\)](#)
- [These Trees Cast No Shade: Understanding HIV Phylogenetics Research \(Part 2\)](#)

- [Understanding Molecular HIV Surveillance: Public Health & Human Rights Implications \(Part 3\)](#)
- [Cluster Tracking is People: Community Town Hall on HIV Genetic Sequencing \(Part 4\)](#)
- [Economic Incentives to Improve HIV Prevention and Treatment](#)
- [Leveraging Social and Behavioral Science in Network Clinical Trials](#)
- [IMPAACT 2016](#) (on the [IMPAACT 2016 study](#))

#### HANC Events (Come say hello!)

- **June 1-5:** Russell Campbell represents HANC and the Legacy Project at the [HIV Prevention Trials Network Annual Meeting](#) in Washington, DC.
- **June 17-21:** Brian Minalga represents HANC and the Legacy Project at the [AIDS Clinical Trials Group Annual Meeting](#) in Washington, DC.
- **June 19:** We recognize [HIV Long-Term Survivors Day](#)
- **July 22:** HANC's Youth Prevention Research Working Group presents a satellite symposium at [IAS 2019](#), "Prevention Solutions for the Next Generation: Highlighting Adolescent Research in the NIH HIV/AIDS Clinical Trials Networks and the Adolescent Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions."
- **August 27:** We recognize [National Faith HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#)