

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 21, 2011 9:22 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: WSJ

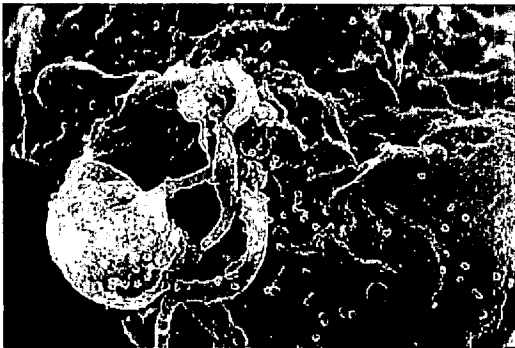
From: Goosby, Eric
Sent: Monday, November 21, 2011 07:51 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: Fw: WSJ

Good one, keeps rolling

From: Lorrie McHugh-Wytkind [mailto:]
Sent: Monday, November 21, 2011 07:06 PM
To: Goosby, Eric; Von Zinkernagel, Deborah J; Gavaghan, Ann; Walsh, Thomas J; Martin, Julia C; Monahan, John T
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Subject: WSJ

B6

By Betsy McKay



New data released Monday by the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) underscore a [call by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton earlier this month](#) to harness new science to curb the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The number of people living with HIV continues to grow, yet tools to control the pandemic are now at hand — and the [UNAIDS World AIDS Day Report 2011](#) shows how they can — when applied — reduce the number of new infections.

An estimated 34 million people were living with HIV in 2010, up from 32.9 million in 2009, according to the UNAIDS report. The number continues to grow because more people become infected every year and a growing number are gaining access to drugs that help them live longer.

But the data also show that while the number of new infections has hovered around 2.7 million people globally every year since 2007, it is falling in 33 countries — 22 of them in sub-Saharan Africa, the region that bears the brunt of the AIDS pandemic.

In her speech earlier this month, Clinton said that recent research and modeling show that combining HIV-prevention methods such as putting more infected people on AIDS drugs earlier, circumcising men and giving more medicines to prevent the transmission of HIV from a mother to a child can dramatically reduce infections.

“We know now we can reduce new infections,” UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibe tells the Health Blog. “Even in this time of financial crisis, we’re seeing results.”

Now it’s time to step up the effort after a “game-changing year,” Sidibe says.

Publication of a landmark study in May showed that AIDS drugs, known as antiretrovirals, not only restore HIV-infected people to health, but also make them far less infectious. Those put on treatment early in their infection were at least 96% less likely to transmit the virus to their sexual partners than those who started on drugs later. The drugs sharply suppress the amount of HIV in the body, leaving less to transmit.

Botswana offers one example of the benefits of widespread treatment, according to the report. The first African country to implement a free national antiretroviral therapy program, it has had more than 90% of eligible infected people on AIDS drugs since 2009. Modeling data suggest that the number of new HIV infections is 30% to 50% lower now than it would have been without such widespread coverage levels, the report says.

AIDS organizations said the UNAIDS findings demonstrate the need to move quickly to take advantage of the new science. “We have to be strategic and take advantage of this unique opportunity,” Chris Collins, vice president and director of public policy for amfAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research, tells the Health Blog.

Officials like Sidibe are battling a decline in global funding to combat HIV/AIDS, however. While the cost of treating infected individuals has declined sharply, new injections of cash will still be necessary to put large numbers of infected people on drugs.

About 6.6 million people in low- and middle-income countries were on AIDS drugs in 2010, an increase of more than 1.35 million over the previous year, according to UNAIDS.

Governments’ contributions to the fight against AIDS dropped 9.7% in 2010, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation and UNAIDS, and U.S. funding for global AIDS for fiscal 2011, including the U.S. contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, was about \$28 million less than for fiscal 2010. The U.S. is the world’s largest AIDS donor.

One hopeful sign, Sidibe says, is that countries with high AIDS burdens, such as South Africa, are spending more of their own money on fighting the pandemic.