$72.7M Grant to Boost HIV Prevention and Treatment Among Youth

With federal funds, Florida State University's College of Nursing will lead the Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV Interventions.

February 16, 2023 By Trent Straube

The federal government awarded Florida State University's College of Nursing a $72.7 million grant to oversee clinical trials aimed at improving HIV prevention and treatment among youth and young adults.

About 21% of new HIV cases in the United States in 2019 were among people ages 13 to 24 years old, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What's more, it's estimated that nearly half of people in this age group who are living with the virus do not know they are HIV positive.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded the grant, which will be spread out over seven years, according to a press release from Florida State University (FSU). The university will serve as the scientific leadership center (SLC) for the newly envisioned Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV Interventions (ATN).

Lisa Hightow-Weidman, MD, PhD, a professor at the FSU College of Nursing who founded the university's Institute on Digital Health and Innovation (IDHI) and has focused on adolescent HIV care and prevention throughout her career, will co-lead the newly funded project with Sybil Hosek, PhD, an associate professor at Cook County Hospital in the Department of Psychiatry.

The SLC will oversee an initial group of seven clinical trials run by different teams. They aim to bolster HIV prevention and treatment among adolescents by developing effective interventions and clinical protocols and shifting current outdated models.

"Our proposed overall network structure is conceptualized as a well-oiled machine with interdependent structures working together seamlessly to achieve the mission of the ATN," Hightow-Weidman said in the release. "Our overall vision for a redesigned and robust ATN is one that not only anticipates and plans for ongoing evolution in the HIV field and an emerging scientific agenda but one with a renewed focus on the most impactful science and priority areas. Where gaps exist, opportunities persist, and the ATN, as the only domestic adolescent focused HIV network, must be poised to meet these challenges without hesitation."

Students at the school expressed support for HIV programs to address young people. “I’m glad FSU has funding for this topic, and I believe this may trigger a must-have conversation about how to prevent HIV. I hope this study has the desired effect and raises awareness on this topic, therefore, improving outcomes of adolescents who manage HIV on a daily basis,” biological sciences student Emma Sharpee told FSUNews.com.

In related news, April 10 marks the annual National Youth HIV & AIDS Awareness Day. For a collection of similar POZ articles, click #Youth. You’ll find headlines such as

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