

A Call to Dr. Fauci--take the high road and share with other sufferers

The FAIR Foundation's 26-member Board of Directors of surgeons, medical directors and patient advocates joins with the HIV community in praising Steve Chase Awards Honoree, Anthony Fauci, MD, for his great success against HIV. Dr. Fauci, as Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), oversees America's large HIV budget. It should also be noted that preceding recognition of HIV, Dr. Fauci was a very accomplished scientist at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) working in the field of collagen-vascular disorders.

Included on our Board of Directors are members helping HIV patients, including John Fung, MD, Director of the Transplant Center at the Cleveland Clinic, who ushered in the era of liver transplant on HIV patients with the high-profile transplant of strident HIV activist, Larry Kramer, who has described Dr. Fung as "a great man."ⁱ Also included on our Board is Ray Hill, who for two decades was one of America's most vociferous HIV activists. Ray has received the ACLU Lifetime Achievement Award for advancing the rights of gay, lesbian and transgender citizens and was voted "gay hero" seven years in a row by the gay community of Houston, Texas. Ray still helps HIV patients but has switched his focus to diabetes, which has caused amputation of his feet, and hepatitis C, which has been recognized for years as being responsible for more deaths in America's HIV patients than the opportunistic infections that used to kill them.ⁱⁱ

Dr. Fauci stated his success best on CNN: "...the scientific advancements that have been made in HIV [research] are breathtaking [with] highly effective drugs to suppress HIV to the point where what was a death sentence in the early eighties to now having patients who look and feel well, who are leading very productive, very gratifying lives..."ⁱⁱⁱ

Indeed, deaths from HIV disease have plummeted over 90 percent in many states including a 98 percent decline in newly-infected patient deaths in California from 9,764 to 229 (as of 8/31/08).^{iv v}

Yet, Dr. Fauci still accepts ten percent of the entire bio-medical research budget --\$2.9 billion of tax-payer dollars—for HIV alone and that exorbitant amount will increase greatly under the new TARP plan that allocates \$7.8 billion more to the NIH in proportion to past funding. In addition, Dr. Fauci recently went before Congress and asked for an additional \$4.8 billion, part of which is for "preventive research."^{vi} The 2009 HIV budget request is \$24.1 billion and^{vii} the amount budgeted for HIV by our government since its onset is now approaching \$300 billion.^{viii}

It should also be noted that HIV receives many billions of dollars as a result of funding from Bill Gates, TV shows *The Survivor*, *American Idol*, *The Apprentice*, private foundations like amfAR, the Elizabeth Glazer Foundation, as well as fund-raising by Hollywood and music industry celebrities Sharon Stone, Elizabeth Taylor, Barry Manilow, Bono and dozens of others. Billionaire Warren Buffet has pledged his \$40 billion to Bill Gates's Foundation and is also supportive of Gates's favoritism for fighting HIV.

Does your illnesses reimburse you for housing expenses? The Department of Health and Human Services benefits only one disease in this manner with its HOPWA program—Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS.^{ix} There is no HOPWA for diabetics, HOPWA for Alzheimer's, just one that has provided billions of dollars to help AIDS patients with housing expenses.

In the Desert Sun article, Dr. Fauci proudly speaks of his orchestrating \$48 billion to fight global AIDS after President Bush said to him, "Don't worry about the cost," and most of that will go towards battling one disease, HIV, in one country, Africa. Consider: the entire bio-medical research budget for every disease known to man is only \$29 billion.

When our organization exhibits at large conventions and the attendees see our banner that reflects the figures in the paragraph below, a new member joins, on average, every 2 to 3 minutes all day long while expressing great consternation at the favoritism that continues to be afforded HIV disease in funding by our government.

For example, it is well recognized that hepatitis C (HCV) is responsible for more deaths in AIDS patients than the opportunistic infections that used to kill them.^x Diabetes kills more Americans than AIDS and breast cancer combined and cardiovascular disease (CVD) kills 871,000 compared to 14,016 for AIDS. The NIH is spending \$20, \$39, \$29 on each patient with HCV, diabetes & CVD on bio-medical research versus \$2,774 on each HIV patient via Dr. Fauci's Institute within the NIH. Similar small amounts are being allocated for thousands of other illnesses, including 6,000 rare illnesses that receive, on average, only \$107,500 per illness from the NIH for biomedical research.^{xi}

It is likely Dr. Fauci would reply to our calls for re-distribution of a portion of HIV funding to other illnesses by referencing his desire to find a vaccine for HIV. Now that he has overseen such great success in developing drugs for HIV, he now refers to a vaccine as his "holy grail." Indeed, Dr. Fauci and Bill Gates are now spending billions on that effort, even though Dr. Fauci admits in the Desert Sun article, "What we don't know is how we can induce with a vaccine an immune response that would be protective like any other vaccine."

Would a vaccine for HIV be good? Yes, but before we continue to spend billions on that effort to benefit patients who have "highly effective drugs to suppress HIV to the point where what was a death sentence in the early eighties to now having patients who look and feel well" let us re-direct a portion of those funds to non-AIDS illnesses that do not have effective remedies (drugs), including the sixteen that kill a million more annually than HIV now.^{xii}

It has also been argued that substantial HIV research funding is necessary because it may lead to cures for other illnesses, is affecting the young and is infectious.

Non-AIDS patients want the NIH researching their diseases in a fair and equitable manner without having to wait for secondary benefits—the crumbs—of HIV research. An HIV researcher is working for the Nobel Prize for his work on HIV, not Alzheimer's, diabetes, or other illnesses.

In the most recent CDC reporting, the number of HIV/AIDS deaths in patients under the age of fourteen is 13, under the age of nineteen is 62, under the age of twenty-four is 224 and under the age of twenty-nine is 629. Compare to just one infant disease: Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is estimated to kill 2,500 every year.^{xiii}

In regards to the infectious nature of HIV, it is not fair to punish diseases that are not known to be infectious and are acquired congenitally or environmentally with such HIV favoritism, especially when Dr. Fauci himself stated on CNN that the solution to global AIDS

is “prevention.” Indeed, HIV is 99.9% preventable whereas millions of other patients had no responsibility for contracting their illness.

Greed has brought our system of finance—capitalism—to its knees and now socialism is creeping into our country. It would be a shame if Dr. Fauci’s legacy was tainted with the same adjective when there are thousands of other illnesses that deserve increased funding.

Therefore, I join with our Board of Directors in calling on Dr. Fauci to take the high road and share his overflowing treasure chest of research dollars with other sufferers, refuse any more funding for HIV disease with a plea to Congress to re-direct a substantial portion of existing HIV funding to other illnesses that have not had the success he has achieved.

“In the Desert Sun today, AIDS activist Barry Manilow said it best: “If it were up to me, I would raise money for all of them. No one is more important than another. People are people. We should be trying to help them all.”

Indeed, with fair and equitable disease research funding.

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FAIR Foundation

ⁱ http://fairfoundation.org/news_letter/2007/01march/fung_kramer.pdf

ⁱⁱ http://fairfoundation.org/specter_letter_hcv_in_aids_pts.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.fairfoundation.org/fauci.wmv>

^{iv} http://fairfoundation.org/states/hiv-aids_deaths_by_state.htm

^v <http://fairfoundation.org/quiz/quizanswer.htm>

^{vi} http://fairfoundation.org/states/hiv-aids_deaths_by_state.htm

^{vii} <http://www.kff.org/hivaids/upload/7029-041.pdf>

^{viii} Henry J. Kaiser Foundation reports \$150 billion HIV funding up to 2004 at http://www.fairfoundation.org/overall_aids_funding_to_2004-Kaiser_Foundation.pdf Every year thereafter the amount budgeted has been \$20+ billion including \$24.1 billion for 2009. In addition, one must note the \$48 billion PEPFAR funding, of which approx \$30 billion is for global AIDS.

^{ix} <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/aidshousing/programs/>

^x http://fairfoundation.org/specter_letter_hcv_in_aids_pts.pdf

^{xi} <http://www.fairfoundation.org/factslinks.htm>

xii <http://www.fairfoundation.org/thesixteen.htm>

xiii <http://www.cdc.gov/sids/index.htm>