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IAS 2015 TO FEATURE LANDMARK RESEARCH COVERING THE MOST CRITICAL AREAS IN THE GLOBAL RESPONSE TO HIV

Studies on the Benefits of Earlier HIV Treatment, Real-World Use of PrEP and Advances in Cure Research Lead the Conference Agenda

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada – More than 6,000 HIV professionals from around the world have gathered in Vancouver for the 8th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (IAS 2015), the world's leading scientific meeting on HIV. The IAS 2015 conference programme includes 1,200 scientific abstracts and dozens of satellite sessions addressing every aspect of HIV research and global responses to the epidemic. The four-day conference is organized by the International AIDS Society (IAS), in partnership with the University of British Columbia Division of AIDS, based at St. Paul's Hospital, Providence Health Care.

It has been nearly 20 years since the International AIDS Society last convened in Vancouver. At the historic 1996 International AIDS Conference, researchers presented ground-breaking evidence that combination antiretroviral therapy could effectively control HIV infection. Since that time, new therapies have transformed the lives of millions of people living with HIV worldwide, and significant advances have been made in HIV prevention.

"IAS 2015 will be a game-changing conference in the history of HIV," said **Chris Beyrer**, IAS 2015 International Chair and IAS President. "We'll release new data that provides compelling evidence for the earlier initiation of HIV treatment and the feasibility of implementing PrEP in diverse settings around the world, and showcase notable advances in the pursuit of an HIV cure. But this is not a time for complacency. Our focus now must be on implementing the full range of prevention and treatment options currently at our disposal."

"IAS 2015 returns to Vancouver at another watershed moment in the global HIV epidemic since HAART was first introduced here in 1996," said **Julio Montaner**, IAS 2015 Local Co-Chair and Director of the British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS. "We've made major gains in the past two decades in British Columbia and with the implementation of our pioneered Treatment as Prevention[®] strategy. We have gone from a province with the highest per capita rate of HIV to the lowest rate. Research advances continue to bring us closer to the day when HIV and AIDS are no longer a crisis throughout the world."

At today's opening press conference, plenary speakers **Nora Volkow**, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse at the U.S. National Institutes of Health and **Ambassador Deborah Birx**, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Director of the PEPFAR programme, previewed plenary addresses detailing their agencies' HIV research, policy and implementation agendas. **Michel Sidibé**, Executive Director of UNAIDS, also updated attendees on progress toward the achievement of global HIV treatment goals.

“IAS 2015 promises to be one of our most scientifically significant meetings,” said IAS Executive Director **Owen Ryan**. “In addition to releasing the latest science, our meetings have always served a critically important role in advocating for fair and effective policies, supporting increased funding for research and services and galvanizing communities around the world.”

Innovative and inspiring responses to AIDS by NGOs, the private sector, governments and individuals are also a key component of the lessons and experiences shared at the IAS meeting. At today’s opening ceremony, musician and director **Ryan Lewis** and his mother, **Julie Lewis**, a 30-year HIV survivor, discussed the 30/30 Project, which they founded to improve access to comprehensive healthcare in communities impacted by HIV/AIDS. The project is working to develop 30 new medical facilities worldwide, the first of which will be built in Malawi and Kenya.

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About IAS

Founded in 1988, the International AIDS Society (IAS) is the world’s largest association of HIV professionals, with members from more than 180 countries. IAS members work on all fronts of the global response to AIDS and include researchers, clinicians, policy and programme planners, and public health and community practitioners.

About IAS 2015

The 8th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (19-22 July, Vancouver) is the leading scientific meeting on HIV. IAS 2015 brings together a broad cross section of more than 6,000 HIV professionals from around the world, with a focus on moving science into practice.

IAS 2015: Join the Conversation

Get the latest conference updates and share your thoughts and ideas through the IAS 2015 Social Media channels.

- We are tweeting – [@IAS_conference](#) and [@iasociety](#) – and hope many of you will tweet along with us, using **#IAS2015** to keep the conversation going.
- Like IAS 2015 on [Facebook](#) – and stay in touch with the latest conference updates and developments.
- Check us out on Instagram to see photos as they are happening! <https://instagram.com/iasociety/>
- Tell us why you’re following IAS 2015 and what matters most to you. Join the IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention group on LinkedIn. You are welcome to start new discussions and add your comments to existing threads.

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