

Opinion: AIDS becoming a forgotten disease

By Warner C. Greene

I saw my first AIDS case in 1981, the year the disease was identified. And for most of the time since then, I've conducted laboratory research to better understand the precise mechanisms by which the virus HIV causes AIDS.

Lately, however, I've been equally worried about a related condition that is prevalent, persistent and threatens to bankrupt us. People in my world call it AIDS fatigue.

AIDS fatigue has several telltale symptoms. One is thinking that the AIDS crisis is under control. Another is believing that AIDS is someone else's problem, while still another is assuming that antiretroviral medications cure HIV/AIDS. All three notions, unfortunately, are false.

World AIDS Day – Dec. 1 – is a great opportunity to begin treating these malignant misconceptions, which we must do to address one of the most lethal pandemics ever to strike mankind. As a global community, we are not supplying – and may not even be able to afford to supply – enough of the lifesaving drugs required to prevent an HIV infection from progressing to AIDS for all the people who need them.

Our best option is to cure this disease – thereby eliminating the need to fund a lifetime of expensive medications for tens of millions of people – while also developing a vaccine to prevent new infections. And to do this, we must first treat AIDS fatigue with the only medicine known to address it: facts.

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Francisco.

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