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Columbus AIDS Task Force Encouraged by Experimental HIV Vaccine Research

The September 24th announcement of a promising HIV vaccine trial in Thailand is being met with guarded optimism by the Columbus AIDS Task Force (CATF). Peggy Anderson, LISW-S, CATF president and CEO, says the agency is encouraged about the initial successes of this study. "Preventing the spread of HIV through greater awareness is a significant part of our mission," states Ms. Anderson, "any success in preventing the spread of HIV makes us hopeful in regards to where this research will lead."

"Even with a possible vaccine in the future, we need to remember that a vaccine is not a cure for HIV," continues Anderson, "We have over 3,000 individuals living with HIV in Franklin County. A vaccine will not provide a cure for those already affected. We must remain committed to the fight against HIV/AIDS as well as our commitment to care."

Franklin County leads Ohio counties in newly diagnosed cases according to Ohio Department of Health data. "With the highest numbers of newly diagnosed cases in Ohio, our community has to increase awareness of HIV and how it's transmitted," adds Anderson, "the fight is not over."

"Until there is a cure, many individuals living with HIV still need services, and until there is a vaccine, the community needs prevention and testing efforts."

CATF is a full-service, community-based, non-profit AIDS Service Organization providing comprehensive care services, educational programs, and HIV testing. CATF primarily serves the seven counties making up the Central Ohio region; however, some of its programs serve central eastern Ohio. CATF is a United Way member agency and is CARF accredited.

CATF's mission is to lead the fight against HIV/AIDS through awareness, advocacy, and care.

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