

Director's Message



Update from the AIDS Research Institute Director

There's no denying these are trying times. I and many of our senior members thought getting through one epidemic was enough but now many of our faculty, staff members and research programs are taking on new leadership roles in the coronavirus pandemic. I believe, and have made the point with UCSF leadership, that the uniquely broad San Francisco HIV research community and its model of collaborating across our many sites, disciplines and organizational affiliations has positioned us to pivot with remarkable speed in responding to our new challenge. Many of our members taking on leadership roles are in the new generations of clinicians and researchers, and I believe the long focus of the ARI in supporting that vigorous talent is at least partly to be credited for our institution's success. Our collaborating partners, including CFAR and CAPS, the Division of HIV, Infectious Diseases and Global Health and the Division of Experimental Medicine at ZSFG as well as the Gladstone, Vitalant and the SF Department of Public Health have all stepped up as we see most evidently on the weekly COVID-19 Grand Rounds of the Department of Medicine ^[1].

The ARI has tried to maintain its focus on supporting our community although the challenges are real. Our amfAR HIV Cure Research Institute activities were abruptly halted with the University Sheltering in Place order, just as Dr. Steve Deeks ^[2] was about to launch his ambitious and complex cure clinical trial. We're hoping to reengage as the return to work is lifted but like others we realize many open questions remain about how that will actually happen. The ARI believes that although many are now working full time with COVID-19, that HIV is still a compelling problem locally and globally and HIV research can still benefit from ARI support.

In the past year, ARI has recommitted to supporting our members with a primary focus on

those in early career stages but also addressing the University-wide imperative to support diversity, equity and inclusivity. ARI continues to provide direct salary support to infectious disease fellows allowing them research training in the clinic at Ward 86 and strategic research support grants as bridge funding towards subsequent grant applications. And for the first time this year, ARI provided funding for Scholars in the Population Health and Health Equity Program in the School of Medicine whose work is HIV focused. Another new ARI initiative is the smaller, time-sensitive ?Boost Awards? which we support in close collaboration with CFAR. And finally, ARI continues to recognize our leaders in teaching and mentoring with our annual awards.

Thanks to all our members for your contributions and commitment, particularly as so many have taken on new responsibilities during this pandemic. We look forward to continuing to support the full San Francisco HIV research community.

Paul Volberding, MD
Director

Contact Us
UCSF Main Site

© 2020 The Regents of the University of California

Source URL: <https://ari.ucsf.edu/about-us/directors-message>

Links

[1] <https://medicine.ucsf.edu/news/covid-19-news-coverage-recorded-medical-grand-rounds>

[2] <https://profiles.ucsf.edu/steven.deeks>