

Health

Philadelphia researchers are leaders in major effort to cure HIV

Updated: JULY 14, 2016 — 1:07 AM EDT

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Luis J. Montaner (right) with Matthew Fair, a member of his lab at the Wistar Institute. Montaner, who is working to boost immune system efforts to fight and potentially cure HIV, is the co-principal investigator (co-leader) of a team made up of 30 researchers at eight institutions that the National Institutes of Health on Wednesday (July 13, 2016) named as one of six large groups it will fund to seek a cure for HIV. Wistar and the University of Pennsylvania are testing two technologies that could potentially complement each other. The Philadelphia-led team will receive \$23 million over five years.

by Don Sapatkin, Staff Writer

In the biggest effort yet to find a cure for HIV, the National Institutes of Health on Wednesday named six large scientific teams, one led by Philadelphia's Wistar Institute and the University of Pennsylvania, to tackle different parts of the challenge.

The government will commit \$30 million a year for five years to the project. The Philadelphia collaboration will get \$4.6 million a year.

For years, with the world focused on getting treatment to millions of infected people and preventing further spread of the disease, the notion of a "cure seemed naive and overambitious," said Luis J. Montaner, the director of an HIV laboratory at Wistar, who will share leadership of the Philadelphia team. "People didn't use the word."

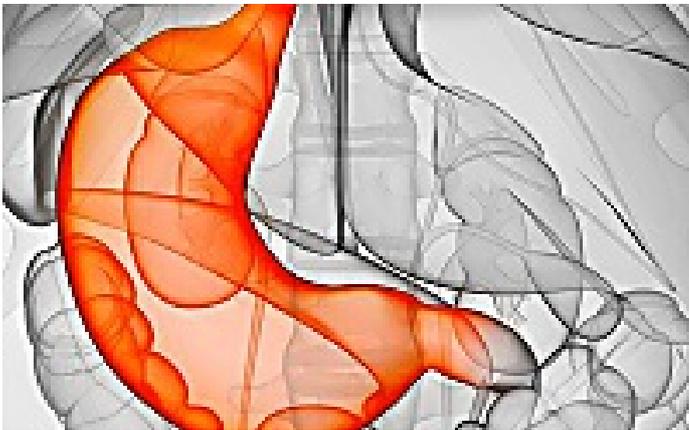
That has gradually changed, with major funding now being dedicated to finding a vaccine and an outright cure, although any possible success would be years in the future.

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