



Dear (INSERT NAME HERE),

Herpes Cure Advocacy (HCA) is a non-profit advocacy organization with the goal of cure, treatment, and prevention for HSV types 1 and 2. The field of herpes has gained momentum in recent years through the efforts of HCA, including an addendum to the US Department of Health and Human Services 2020 Strategic Plan for STIs that will outline a national strategy to cure, treat, and prevent HSV for the first time. In November 2022, NIH/CDC held a joint workshop on genital herpes - the first federal meeting for HSV in decades.

Herpes impacts the majority of Americans - yet its impact on brain health is not well known or understood. Recent evidence has shown that HSV-1 infection contributed to neurodegenerative disease and is strongly implicated as a contributing factor to Alzheimer's Disease. AD is a leading cause of death in America with a significant burden of disease and economic impact.

Additionally, Herpes is widely recognized as a driver of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Given the syndemic nature of HSV and HIV, the development of a vaccine for HSV can prevent transmission and reduce the global burden of both HSV and HIV/AIDS. Prioritizing HSV vaccine development can help reduce the global health burden of both HSV and HIV infections.

As of now, Tuberculosis, MonkeyPox, and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) have been designated as diseases relating to HIV, and while also incredibly important, their link to HIV acquisition is not comparable to HSV. Research by Dr. Larry Corey and colleagues indicated that genital herpes infection is associated with a 2 to 4-fold risk of HIV acquisition and that 30% of new HIV cases are directly attributable to new HSV infection. Herpes drives the HIV epidemic more efficiently than any other STI - yet the funding for herpes simplex is markedly lower than Chlamydia, Gonorrhea or Syphilis.

Currently, there are *only two* vaccines for herpes in clinical trials in the US. For an infection that is driving the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and is strongly suspected as a contributing factor to Alzheimer's, we need to do more.

Respectfully,

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