



## Game Changers

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South Florida Healthcare Professionals on the Move:  
*Promotions, Achievements, Engagements & Accolades*

### The Campbell Foundation Awards Grant to Develop First-in-Class Drugs to Target "Viral Budding" of HIV

[The Campbell Foundation](#), a nonprofit organization dedicated to funding HIV/AIDS research based in Ft. Lauderdale, has awarded an \$80,000 grant to **Jonathan Leis, PhD**, professor of microbiology-immunology at **Northwestern University**. The grant will be used to further his research into the development of drugs used to block the spread of new viral particles from cell plasma membranes infected with the HIV virus into susceptible cells.

The research is particularly significant because of the challenges associated with finding a viable HIV vaccine. Currently, patients with HIV must take multiple anti-retroviral drugs (i.e. a cocktail) to control their infections. However, these drugs come with a number of side effects. Not only that, but an estimated two out of ten people infected with HIV are experiencing partial resistance to one or more of the drugs now on the market, according to the **Centers for Disease Control**.

Leis and his research team are developing "Viral Budding Inhibitors" (VBIs) that are different from drugs used today in that patients with HIV would be significantly less likely to develop resistance to them.

"VBIs are expected to prevent the release of virus particles from cells and thus will slow down the spread of HIV infection to uninfected cells," said Leis. "Controlling the spread of virus at any time will help protect the immune system and enhance defenses to the infection."

There are an estimated 37 million people in the world living with HIV today and an estimated 17 million receiving antiretroviral therapy, according to the **World Health Organization**. Worldwide an estimated 2.1 million people became newly infected with HIV in 2015.

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