Dr. Irwin Chaiken and Campbell Foundation Executive Director Ken Rapkin.

The Campbell Foundation, a Fort Lauderdale based nonprofit HIV/AIDS organization, awarded a $75,000 grant to fund a team of researchers in Philadelphia.

In a news release, the Campbell Foundation announced Dr. Irwin Chaiken and his team of researchers at Drexel University College of Medicine would use the grant to develop an effective delivery system targeting hidden reservoirs of the HIV virus.

That "delivery system" is called killer peptides.

The goal, scientists note, is to suppress HIV infection and its progression with specially designed molecules. Those molecules target protein on the surface of the virus to stop it from entering cells and starting the infection cycle.

"The development of a long-acting formulation of HIV-1 inactivators that can selectively target and kill infectious viruses, viruses activated from latent reservoirs, and activated latently infected cells (the "kill" component of "kick and kill" approach to attacking latent reservoirs), could suppress virus infection, progression and spread," said Dr. Chaiken, in a news release.

"Long-acting treatments may also lead to 'treatment as prevention' pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) strategies."

The Chaiken Research Group, reportedly, uses a combination of chemical and biological approaches to investigate the fundamental nature of protein interactions in solution, viruses and cells, and their roles in disease pathogenesis.

"Achieving full viral suppression of HIV has proven difficult, even in an age of effective drug regimens," said Campbell Foundation Executive Director Ken Rapkin, in a news release. "This research team will look into blocking HIV-1 entry and inhibit HIV replication in the latent reservoirs that harbor the virus. The goal of developing a long-acting antiretroviral would be key to the overall health of those with HIV, as well as reducing the possibility of transmission."

http://southfloridagaynews.com/Health/campbell-foundation-s-philadelphia-team-receives-grant.html