

The Global Voice

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF MEDICINE GLOBAL HEALTH ALLIANCE



WORLD AIDS DAY 2025 HEROES

by Cathy Mwangi, PhD

Global health research in the U.S. academic medical centers has faced dire threats with proposed cuts to the federal budget with reduced funding for global health programs by 62 percent, from \$10 billion to \$3.8 billion. These cuts include discontinuing \$1.7 billion annually for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS. To strengthen its defenses against these budget cuts and build collaborations across its campus, the University of Maryland School of Medicine recently formed a new initiative, the University of Maryland School of Medicine Global Health Alliance (UMGHA). This new alliance will safeguard the foundation that exists and further support our world-class clinicians and researchers from our institution to continue solving generational health challenges throughout Baltimore, the country, and worldwide.[[article link](#)]



This new global health alliance emphasizes our commitment to our mission to serve not just those in our local communities but to those countries throughout the world without access to basic health services. - Dean Mark T. Gladwin, MD

World AIDS Day 2025 Spotlight

"We cannot achieve HIV epidemic control without understanding and addressing disengagement from care and the pathways that bring people back"

On World AIDS Day 2025, we recognize Dr. Marie-Claude C. Lavoie, an epidemiologist and implementation scientist at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and Director of Strategic Information & Evaluation at CIHEB. Her work strengthens HIV prevention and treatment systems across Africa and advances global understanding of re-engagement and continuity of care.



Marie-Claude Lavoie, PhD, MPH

Dr. Lavoie recently co-authored a landmark Lancet HIV viewpoint introducing a new framework for understanding why people disengage from HIV care and how they return. She stresses that **"re-engagement is not a single event, but a process shaped by structural, behavioral, and clinical factors."**

Alongside Dr. Claassen and partners in the U.S. and Zambia, she is evaluating long-acting injectable PrEP through the NIH-funded SCALE UP Study, which was featured at the 2025 International AIDS Society Conference in Kigali. The study aims to guide real-world scale-up of this promising intervention.

Dr. Lavoie's work continues to shape policy and practice in HIV care systems. Her message resonates this World AIDS Day: ending the HIV epidemic requires understanding people's journeys and ensuring no one falls through the cracks—capturing the spirit of this year's theme, **Overcoming Disruption, Transforming the AIDS Response.**



At IAS Conference with Linah Mwango and Dr. Obvious Chilyanyama



With the SCALE-UP Youth Advisory Panel to launch study



With the SCALE-UP At-Large Study Advisory Panel

World AIDS Day 2025 Spotlight

"As we honor World AIDS Day, I hope we can reflect on the tremendous advances that we have made towards HIV epidemic control. As we look to the future, I hope that we can protect the gains that have been made thus far and continue advancing innovative service delivery and research to achieve our goal of ending the HIV epidemic."

On World AIDS Day 2025, we recognize Dr. Cassidy W. Claassen, MD, MPH, for his global leadership in HIV prevention, treatment, and health system strengthening. A national expert on PrEP who helped lead Zambia's rollout, Dr. Claassen has advanced both oral and injectable PrEP and developed integrated care models for populations facing structural barriers. **"Access without delivery is not enough—innovation must meet people where they are,"** he notes.

His 2025 research highlighted system-level and individual barriers contributing to post-discharge mortality among people living with HIV in Zambia. Beyond research, Dr. Claassen strengthens national HIV programs, mentors local clinicians, and ensures data-driven practices: **"Strong HIV programs rely on strong information systems."**

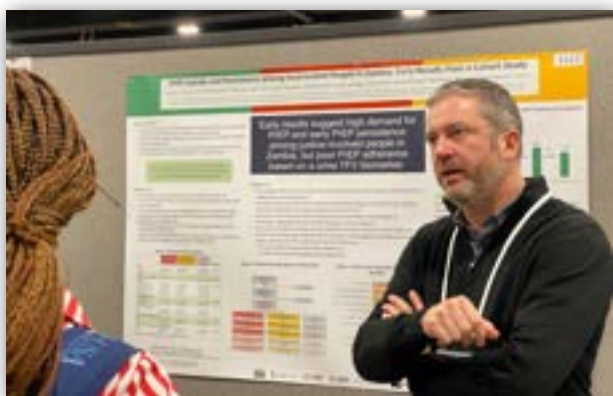
This World AIDS Day, we honor Dr. Claassen's dedication to science, service, training, and ensuring innovations reach those most in need—embodying an ethos of **"care beyond context"** and demonstrating how global and domestic health systems strengthen one another.



Cassidy W. Claassen, MD, MPH



"I knew early that I wanted to be a doctor and come back to Africa and contribute in some way."



Presenting PrEP Uptake poster at IAS



With DREAMS participates in Zambia.

World AIDS Day 2025 Spotlight

Today we honor progress and reaffirm our mission to advance science and strengthen care.

On World AIDS Day 2025, we recognize Dr. Patrick O. Dakum, MBBS, MPH—Associate Professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and CEO of the Institute of Human Virology Nigeria—whose three decades of leadership have strengthened HIV prevention, treatment, research, and public health systems across Africa.

As CEO of IHVN, Dr. Dakum has expanded HIV treatment services to more than 350,000 people and advanced national capacity in laboratories, data science, and implementation research through multiple NIH-funded

centers. As CEO of IHVN, Dr. Dakum has expanded HIV treatment services to more than 350,000 people and advanced national capacity in laboratories, data science, and implementation research through multiple NIH-funded centers. The Institute's state-of-the-art public health campus, launched in 2023, now serves as a regional hub for infectious disease research, TB/HIV program delivery, training, and diagnostics. World AIDS Day 2025 calls for renewed commitment to overcoming disruption and transforming the AIDS response. Dr. Dakum's contributions mirror these global priorities. From advancing evidence on aging with HIV to leading large-scale treatment programs and building institutional capacity, his work demonstrates what is possible when research, leadership, and implementation excellence intersect.

This World AIDS Day, we honor Dr. Dakum's enduring impact—rooted in science, strengthened by partnership, and instrumental in transforming Nigeria's HIV response while inspiring global progress.

On this World AIDS Day, we honor the remarkable researchers and scientists within the University of Maryland School of Medicine whose unwavering dedication has shaped global progress in the HIV response. Through enduring commitment to improving human health, they have advanced prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and long-term care for millions around the world. Their work has deepened scientific understanding, strengthened clinical and public health practice, and expanded pathways to improved outcomes in diverse settings. Today, we reflect with gratitude on their contributions and reaffirm the collective responsibility to sustain this vital work until the HIV burden is fully overcome.



Patrick Dakum, MMBS, MPH



CEO of Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria

Manhattan E. Charurat, PhD, MHS Invested as the Homer and Martha Gudelsky Distinguished Professor in Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine by Jennifer Gonzales

To close World AIDS Day 2025, Manhattan E. Charurat, PhD, MHS, was invested as the Homer and Martha Gudelsky Distinguished Professor in Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. Surrounded by family, friends and colleagues tuning in from afar and filling the iconic Westminster Hall, the ceremony captured the story of a global health leader whose work has transformed HIV prevention and care stretching from Baltimore to Africa.

Photos from the event show Dr. Charurat standing beside longtime collaborators, receiving the medallion from UMSOM Dean Mark T. Gladwin, MD, and sharing heartfelt words of gratitude. Speakers—including Institute of Human Virology Co-Founder William Blattner, MD, highlighted his research on mother-to-child HIV transmission, mobile testing innovations, and the more than \$200 million in global health partnerships he has brought to UMSOM.



"Global health isn't the work of one individual or one institution. It's a collective endeavour built on trust, collaboration, and convection. That a healthier world is necessary and possible."



Through candid images of applause, quiet reflection, and celebration, the ceremony reveals the impact of a scientist whose work spans decades, continents, and communities. The investiture also honors the legacy of the Homer & Martha Gudelsky Family Foundation, whose distinguished professorship has recognized leaders driving scientific discovery since 2005.



As the final photographs capture Dr. Charurat addressing the audience, he dedicates the honor to his family, mentors, and colleagues across Baltimore and Africa: **"Together we will continue to make a difference,"** he said. **"We have a long way to go and I'm glad you're right there with me."**