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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Big Changes in HIV Research Section of San Francisco Department of Public Health

Changes Name to Bridge HIV, Relocates and Expands Research Facilities

San Francisco, CA – The HIV Research Section of the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) today announced its name change to **Bridge HIV** and its relocation to expanded research and clinical facilities on the first floor of the historic 25 Van Ness Avenue.

The move comes as part of the San Francisco Office and Renovation (SOAR) project, a \$9.5 million grant awarded by the National Center for Research Resources at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment of 2009.

The organization's new Bridge HIV name distinguishes the research unit of the SFDPH AIDS Office from a large field of organizations and institutions conducting HIV prevention research. The name change to Bridge HIV also reflects the Department's history and efforts to reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS through collaborations with diverse communities across the San Francisco Bay Area and throughout the world.

Currently, Bridge HIV supports many HIV prevention studies and investigator-initiated research. Bridge HIV conducts this research through collaborations with a wide network of international investigators and volunteers who are influencing the development of innovative HIV prevention strategies. Bridge HIV also functions as a lead site for the HIV Vaccine Trials Network, is a member of the HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) and the Microbicides Trials Network (MTN) – worldwide collaborative clinical trials networks funded by the National Institutes of Health and supported by a strong local and global research community.

“We are excited to unveil our new name, which evokes our heritage of conducting ground-breaking HIV research in the San Francisco Bay Area,” says Susan Buchbinder, MD, Director of Bridge HIV. “Our name also symbolizes important tenets of our mission, such as connection through collaboration. By connecting to researchers and communities throughout the world, our scientific breakthroughs can be used to help people most affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.”

The mission of the San Francisco Department of Public Health is to protect and promote the health of all San Franciscans.

We shall – Assess and research the health of the community – Develop and enforce health policy – Prevent disease and injury –
– Educate the public and train health care providers – Provide quality, comprehensive, culturally-proficient health services – Ensure equal access to all

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“The expansion of our facilities will help us advance our research,” says Dr. Buchbinder. “This is an important step towards increasing our capacity to support large, diverse groups of study participants.”

“Bridge HIV plays a critical role in the San Francisco Department of Public Health by providing important research and experts in HIV vaccine and prevention science” said Barbara Garcia, Director of Health. “The San Francisco Office and Renovation (SOAR) project will benefit all three leading U.S.-based HIV prevention research units within the SFDPH AIDS Office. With improvements to several floors in the building, we will expand our ability to conduct state-of-the-art HIV research and promote collaboration between and within research units and colleagues worldwide.”

Bridge HIV is a recognized leader in HIV prevention research, and has been working to find new and advanced ways to fight HIV/AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic. The organization is tied to early research in HIV/AIDS epidemiology that led to the discovery of the HIV virus and the founding of the SFDPH AIDS Office in 1982. Thirty years later, Bridge HIV is currently one of three independent grant-funded research units of the AIDS Office.

ABOUT BRIDGE HIV

Since the early 1980s, Bridge HIV's mission has been to develop interventions that reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS locally and globally. Bridge HIV is currently pursuing that mission on several fronts, including identifying risk factors for HIV infections and disease progression, conducting clinical trials of a variety of HIV prevention strategies (e.g., preventive vaccines, pre-exposure prophylaxis, peer counseling and health navigation, topical microbicide, and combination prevention strategies), developing innovative community engagement strategies to reach and partner with San Francisco Bay Area communities, and engaging highly-affected communities in the research process. For more information, visit www.bridgehiv.org.