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LAUSANNE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL ANNOUNCES POSITIVE LIFE FESTIVAL 2023 – A FESTIVAL AND CYCLE OF EVENTS AND ACTIONS EXPLORING MULTIPLE FACETS OF HIV TODAY THROUGH ART AND CULTURE

-- Call for proposals for films and performance will award grants of up to CHF 10'000 to 6 productions to be featured at festival --

-- Gilead Sciences Switzerland acts as Founding Sponsor --

Zug, December 1, 2022 - Just a few days before today's World AIDS Day, Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV) announced the first edition of *Positive Life Festival*¹, a cycle of events and actions culminating in a cultural festival on World AIDS Day 2023. Discussion of HIV is thus back in the public domain and outdated ideas about the virus are countered by updated images and representations of HIV today.

Although the reality of HIV has evolved enormously in the past decades, cultural and social representations are still largely dominated by images from the 1980's and 90's, negatively impacting prevention, testing, treatment, and the quality of life of people living with HIV. There is a wide-spread lack of knowledge of important messages, such as U=U (undetectable=untransmittable) – a person living with HIV on successful treatment cannot transmit the virus.²

According to the latest HIV and STD analysis and statistics of the Federal Office of Public Health, around 17'000 people live with HIV in Switzerland today.³ The World Health Organization's (WHO) 90-90-90 goals were nationally reached even before they were officially established in 2014.⁴ Furthermore, as confirmed by an official international comparison report in 2020, Switzerland already hit two of the 95-95-95 targets set by UNAIDS for 2030 (treatment and undetectable viral load).⁵ Concerning the national HIV transmission rate, the figures have been at a historic low in the past years.⁶ However, despite all the medical progress made, HIV organizations in Switzerland are concerned with the 'other' prevailing pandemic of stigma and discrimination – a concern that relates to previous discussions around the unofficial 'fourth 90 goal' regarding achieving good health-related quality of life for people living with HIV.⁷

¹ Official [press release](#) from 28th November 2022.

² UNAIDS (2018). [Undetectable = untransmittable – Public health and HIV viral load suppression](#).

³ Bundesamt für Gesundheit BAG (2022). [HIV/STI-Statistiken und Analysen 2021. Sexuell übertragene Infektionen und Hepatitis B / C in der Schweiz im Jahr 2021: eine epidemiologische Übersicht](#).

⁴ Bundesamt für Gesundheit BAG (2022). [HIV/STI-Statistiken und Analysen 2021. Sexuell übertragene Infektionen und Hepatitis B / C in der Schweiz im Jahr 2021: eine epidemiologische Übersicht](#).

⁵ UNAIDS (2020). [2020 Global AIDS Update. Seizing the moment – Tackling entrenched inequalities to end epidemics](#).

⁶ Bundesamt für Gesundheit BAG (2022). [HIV/STI-Statistiken und Analysen 2021. Sexuell übertragene Infektionen und Hepatitis B / C in der Schweiz im Jahr 2021: eine epidemiologische Übersicht](#).

⁷ Jeffrey V. Lazarus et al. (2016) [Beyond viral suppression of HIV – the new quality of life frontier](#).

In response to this, the Infectious Diseases Service of Lausanne University Hospital, in partnership with regional and national institutions, is organizing *Positive Life Festival 2023*.

The festival year kicks off in December 2022. After a full year of events and actions, the main festival on World AIDS Day 2023 will feature the results of the call for film and performance proposals announced in December 2022 at which grants of up to CHF 10'000 were offered for five short films and a performance to be shown on the day. Alongside the showing of the films, there will be performance, literary workshops, roundtables, and school mediation. People living with HIV are an integral part of this initiative, from beginning to end. David Jackson-Perry, initiator of *Positive Life Festival*, and HIV Project Manager at Lausanne University Hospital, says “we are going into schools, to community centers, to independent cinemas, and working in partnership with regional and national associations. Our aim is to fight stigma but also to bring the general public’s knowledge of HIV up-to-date, through cultural and scientific interventions, ensuring that HIV is discussed in a wide variety of contexts – and not just on 1st December, but all year round”.

At Gilead, we set and achieve bold ambitions in our fight against the world’s most devastating diseases and we are driven by our purpose of making the world a healthier place for all people. We know that our innovation will have the most impact on patients when we help to remove inequities and barriers to care. To this end, Gilead supports community organizations in Switzerland and across the globe that address stigma and discrimination and other barriers to wellbeing.

As a partner, Gilead is as innovative as we are in our science, and we are proud to be the Founding Sponsor of *Positive Life Festival* in Switzerland – an initiative that creates more visibility and a participatory space for people living with HIV. This valuable project is a tool for research dissemination, information, education, and prevention. It contributes to stigma reduction and tackles barriers to the wellbeing of people living with HIV and their families and loved ones.

About Positive Life Festival

On 1st & 2nd December 2023, the Infectious Diseases Service of Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV), in partnership with the University of Lausanne, Groupe Santé Genève, the Swiss Aids Federation, the RTS, Checkpoint Vaud, Vogay, and many other regional and national institutions, is organising a film and literary festival: *Positive Life Festival*. There will be screenings of films specially created for the festival via a call for proposals on 1st December 2022, offering up to CHF 10'000 each for five short films and one performance of any genre. The theme: the reality of HIV today. The festival will also be hosting roundtables, conferences, and school mediation.

Further, starting 1st December 2022 and throughout 2023, the Positive Life Festival Team will be working with their partners to create scientific mediation for schools and for the general public, art exhibitions, and much more. The aim is to put HIV ‘on the public agenda’ in a variety of environments: in high schools, community centers, independent cinemas, television screens, and on the walls of Lausanne University Hospital!

People living with HIV are an integral part of this initiative from beginning to end, putting HIV in the public domain not just on 1st December but all year round!

<http://positive-life-festival.ch>

Facebook / Instagram: **positivelifestival**

About Lausanne University Hospital

CHUV is one of Switzerland’s five university hospitals, alongside Geneva, Bern, Basel and Zurich. It is tasked with three basic missions by the public authorities, namely care, teaching and research. It provides

care in all areas of medicine, including physical disorders and psychiatric illnesses, medical and surgical disciplines, outpatient and inpatient treatment.

In 2021, CHUV's 12,228 employees cared for 51,205 inpatients, accounting for over 500,374 days of hospitalisation. It dealt with 80,261 emergencies, provided 1,451,300 outpatient consultations and welcomed 3,177 new babies into the world. Its annual budget is 1.832 billion Swiss francs.

CHUV works closely with the Faculty of Biology and Medicine of the University of Lausanne to provide undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing education for doctors. It also works with other higher education institutions in the Lake Geneva area (including EPFL, ISREC, the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research and the University of Geneva), with the University Hospitals of Geneva and other hospitals, health care providers and institutions, such as the Federation of Vaud Hospitals and the Vaud Society of Medicine.

Since 2019, CHUV has been ranked as one of the best hospitals in the world according to Newsweek magazine.

About Gilead Sciences

Gilead Sciences is a research-based biopharmaceutical company that discovers, develops, and commercializes innovative medicines for medical areas where there is a high unmet need. The company's mission is to advance and simplify care for patients with life-threatening diseases worldwide. Headquartered in Foster City, California, Gilead has operations in more than 35 countries worldwide. The company focuses on HIV, viral hepatitis, cancer, and COVID-19.

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