Maria Davis was pursuing a childhood dream to model and work in the entertainment industry when she was diagnosed with HIV in 1995. At 35-years-old, having already collaborated with artists like Jay-Z and Sean ‘Diddy’ Combs, Davis’ new challenge was survival. At that time, medications, such as AZT, only prolonged life, and stigma and cultural barriers prevented many from seeking much-needed help. Since Davis began taking medication in 1998, she has been a first-hand observer of the progress of HIV/AIDS treatments. She has participated in a trial for a new medication and now takes a manageable six pills per day – supplemented with vitamins.

In addition to promoting music and comedy twice a month, Davis speaks at schools and universities, educating students about the realities of prevention, transmission, testing and stigma. She’s also completed two New York marathons. There is no cure for HIV/AIDS. However, medical research has helped reduce the risk of transmission and introduced new drugs that have transformed HIV/AIDS from a fatal to a chronic illness for millions worldwide. The National Institutes of Health commits 10 percent of its budget to AIDS research and has been at the forefront of significant scientific advances. But there are critical challenges ahead.

“Without research, there is no hope.”

The Honorable Paul G. Rogers
(Member of Congress, 1955-1979)

Medical Research:
It’s About Maria

Why Research Matters

Maria Davis was pursuing a childhood dream to model and work in the entertainment industry when she was diagnosed with HIV in 1995. At 35-years-old, having already collaborated with artists like Jay-Z and Sean ‘Diddy’ Combs, Davis’ new challenge was survival. At that time, medications, such as AZT, only prolonged life, and stigma and cultural barriers prevented many from seeking much-needed help. Since Davis began taking medication in 1998, she has been a first-hand observer of the progress of HIV/AIDS treatments. She has participated in a trial for a new medication and now takes a manageable six pills per day – supplemented with vitamins.

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There wasn’t much known about HIV in 1995, and people were scrambling and trying to figure it out. I felt very lost.”

- Maria Davis

THE FACTS:
636,000 Americans have died from AIDS-related complications and over 1.1 million are currently HIV-positive. With funding from the National Institutes of Health, researchers are making progress towards developing a vaccine that would prevent new infections. We’ve made progress. But the funding to sustain it is eroding.

THE SOLUTION:
Congress- harness your compassion, gather your will, and boost funding for the National Institutes of Health. NIH funds medical research, and medical research matters.

Do it for Maria.

* AIDSGOV