The 6 Priorities on PWN-USA's Updated Policy Agenda

Positive Women's Network–USA offers an aspirational vision of a safer, more just world—and a guidebook on how to get there.

July 24, 2018 By Cameron Gorman

The Positive Women's Network–USA (PWN-USA), a national group of women living with HIV and their allies, has released an updated policy agenda spelling out its long-term vision for human rights while acknowledging the need for campaigns to defend against current attacks.

The new agenda is organized into six policy priorities, each of which is broken down into an analysis of the current state of the particular matter, followed by recommendations for change and action at the local, state and federal level.

Graphics representing some of PWN-USA's six policy prioritiesCOURTESY OF PWN-USA/MEGAN SMITH/REPEAL HYDE ART PROJECT

The six priorities are:

- Universal Health Care
- Economic Justice

- Sexual & Reproductive Health, Rights & Justice
- Ending Criminalization
- Trans Rights, Safety & Justice
- Ending Violence Against Women Living With HIV

“Our vision is a world where all self-identified women living with HIV (WLHIV) can live long, healthy and dignified lives, free from stigma and discrimination,” the agenda states. “Because the HIV pandemic globally and domestically has been propelled by racism, poverty, misogyny and intersectional stigma, we understand that achieving our vision requires an approach to policy advocacy that takes these factors into account while centering the thought leadership, representation and voices of communities that are directly and disproportionately impacted.”

Graphics representing some of PWN-USA’s six policy priorities COURTESY OF PWN-USA/MEGAN SMITH/REPEAL HYDE ART PROJECT

A year in the making, the agenda is both a response to today’s political climate and a vision of a world where the human rights, justice and dignity of those living with HIV are guaranteed and protected.

“Our agenda contemplates a world where all WLHIV can control our own bodies, sexuality and reproductive possibilities; where access to non-stigmatizing, trauma-informed, comprehensive health care is available regardless of gender expression, country of origin or immigration status; and where all WLHIV have economic security, safety and self-determination,” states the agenda, according to a PWN-USA press release. “Our vision demands that our communities are free from interpersonal, structural and state-sanctioned violence and that we are free from surveillance, confinement and the carceral state—regardless of race, HIV status, immigration status, how we

earn money and which substances we use.”

According to the press release, PWN-USA’s new policy agenda reflects:

- Defensive campaigns to maintain the programs, services and policies on which women living with HIV rely for survival.

- Long-term investment in interrogating, disrupting and eventually dismantling oppressive systems—holding them to account for decades of neglect and even exploitation

- Visioning and creating alternative systems, institutions and processes that serve our communities better.

On the PWN-USA website, visitors can click through the policy agenda and its related priorities. A 19-page downloadable PDF of the agenda can be found here.

“PWN is proud that this new policy agenda jointly reflects the immediate need to protect human rights and basic safety, while also upholding a long-term vision that drives our advocacy forward, building solidarity and long-term political power,” the release states. “We firmly believe that this intersectional agenda, and our increased strategic focus on state-level policy, will guide us toward transformative wins.”

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