AID Atlanta Becomes Affiliate of AIDS Healthcare Foundation

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AID Atlanta, which provides HIV/AIDS services, has teamed up with AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), reports Georgia Voice.

According to the newspaper, “significant debt” is one reason behind the turn of events. Another is that AID Atlanta had tried to become a federally qualified health center, a move that required the group to offer a broader range of health care options. In the process, it lost its focus on HIV/AIDS.

Technically, AID Atlanta is an affiliate of AHF, which operates in 15 states and 36 countries and is overseen by its controversial and outspoken president, Michael Weinstein.

AID Atlanta Interim CEO James Hughey said that AHF would not be taking over any of the services at AID Atlanta, but that it would help get people tested and linked to care.

In February, AID Atlanta CEO Jose Diaz resigned after only a year in the job, citing liver cancer as the reason.

Not everyone is thrilled with the affiliation with AHF. Blogger and activist Mark S. King, who was AID Atlanta’s director of education in the 1990s, told the Georgia Voice that he was heartbroken and concerned about the news. “No agency in this country would willingly crawl into bed with the bullying, denialist, famously litigious AIDS Healthcare Foundation,” King said. “AHF has a long reputation of gobbling up agencies in their path of empire-building—and threatening lawsuits against those who oppose them.”

AHF’s Weinstein has been making headlines for speaking out against Truvada as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). When asked whether AHF’s stance on PrEP would affect AID Atlanta, Hughey said that despite having a $79,000 grant to issue PrEP, his group wasn’t prescribing the med in metro Atlanta: “If you look at PrEP in the community, patients don’t have ability to pay. There is little use of PrEP. It is difficult to pay for, including the positions [to prescribe] and labs. I hope we can bring that into the discussion—how do we pay for it?” he said. “I don’t hear that in any dialogue.”

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