



# AIDSWatch 2019 Kicks Off With Address From CDC Director Robert Redfield

The advocacy event brings more than 550 people living with HIV to Capitol Hill to meet with their members of Congress.

April 1, 2019 By [Trent Straube](#)

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AIDSWatch, billed as the largest HIV advocacy event of the year, takes place April 1 and 2 in Washington, DC. More than 500 people living with HIV will network with one another and speak with their representatives in Congress. The keynote speaker at the opening reception is Robert Redfield, MD, who has been the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for about a year.

“We have the tools to [#endHIV](#)” [@CDCDirector](#)  
[#aidswatch](#) [pic.twitter.com/jF0MUwYsp3](https://pic.twitter.com/jF0MUwYsp3)  
— AIDS United (@AIDS\_United) [April 1, 2019](#)

The annual event is organized by AIDS United, the Treatment Access Expansion Project and the US People Living with HIV Caucus. The presenting sponsor is The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation. An announcement about the 2019 event read, in part:

This year’s AIDSWatch comes at a critical time in the movement to end HIV, following President Trump’s recent State of the Union commitment to end the epidemic by 2030. Meeting this goal will require substantial investment to scale-up evidence-based solutions, policy reforms to remove barriers to care and services, and strong leadership from not just the White House, but from Congress, as well as state, and local governments, to ensure that this achievable goal doesn’t turn out to be just another missed opportunity.

The incredible potential of this moment will only be realized if we commit the necessary

resources, policies and political capital to ensure that HIV prevention, care, treatment, and support services are widely available, especially in marginalized communities most heavily affected by the epidemic.

This year's AIDSWatch will urge Congress, once and for all, to hold this administration accountable, by demanding a strong federal commitment and investment in strategies—rooted in science, not stigma—to end the HIV epidemic in all communities across the United States.

Although Redfield is a longtime HIV researcher, he was a controversial pick to lead the CDC. For the backstory, click [here](#). His presence at this year's AIDSWatch is sure to spark the activist spirit among attendees, as the event arrives as news broke that the CDC holds the patent on HIV med Truvada used as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). For more about that, read blogger Mark S. King's post "[AIDS WATCH: Why Is the CDC Withholding Billions in PrEP Profits?](#)"

Below is the AIDSWatch schedule.

Monday, April 1

Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel, 900 South Orme Street, Arlington, Virginia 22204

7:30 a.m.–8:30 a.m.: Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:30 a.m.–11:45 a.m.: Opening Reception

11:45a.m.–1:15 p.m.: Lunch & State Meetings (buffet lunch provided)

1:20 p.m.–4:25 p.m.: Hosted Meetings and Networking Sessions. [Click here for session details!](#)

5:30 p.m.–7 pm: Positive Leadership Award Reception—Capitol Hill.

Tuesday, April 2

8 a.m.–8:30 a.m.: AIDSWatch Rally, Capitol Hill — Northeast Capitol Lawn

9 a.m.–4 p.m.: Hill Visits

The event's speakers include:

- Jesse Milan Jr., president and CEO of AIDS United
- Robert Greenwald, Treatment Access Expansion Project and faculty director of the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation at Harvard Law School
- Andrew Spieldenner, PhD, chair of US PLHIV Caucus

- Barb Cardell, vice chair of the US PLHIV Caucus
- Daniel Franzese, actor and ambassador of The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation
- Kelly Gluckman, activist and ambassador of The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation
- Tim Mendelson, Elizabeth Taylor's personal and executive assistant of over two decades and officer of The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation
- Deondre Moore, activist and ambassador of The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation
- Brian Sims, state representative of Pennsylvania and ambassador of The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation
- Quinn Tivey, grandson of Elizabeth Taylor and officer of The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation
- Rhys Tivey, grandson of Elizabeth Taylor and ambassador of The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation
- Laela Wilding, granddaughter of Elizabeth Taylor and ambassador of The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation
- Naomi deLuce Wilding, granddaughter of Elizabeth Taylor and ambassador of The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation
- Hundreds of people living with HIV and their allies will also be present.

You can learn more about AIDSWatch [here](#) and follow #AIDSWatch on social media.

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