Anti-LGBT Stances

In a blog post titled "At the White House, Anti-LGBT Stances Inform HIV Policy," AIDS United calls out actions by the Trump administration that have harmed people living with HIV and LGBT people. Here is an edited excerpt.

May 14, 2018 By AIDS United

During its time in power, the Trump administration has made it abundantly clear that it has no desire to protect the rights of the LGBT community and is actively looking to undermine them.

Politico.com published a report on the ways that the Trump administration has been chipping away at Obama-era protections for LGBT Americans, especially in matters of health.

As evidence, it cites Trump administration decisions to:

- Freeze a series of LGBT-friendly rules from taking effect, including an expansion of antidiscrimination protections for transgender individuals enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid
- Reinterpret and opt not to defend the Affordable Care Act's antidiscrimination mandate (Section 1557)
- Pull questions on sexual orientation and gender identity from Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) surveys
- Form the new Conscience and Religious Freedom Division at the HHS Office of Civil Rights to offer greater protections for health care workers who decide not to treat LGBT patients.

These actions pose serious threats to LGBT Americans, but they also pose a threat to Americans living with HIV.

What's more, the Trump administration's neglect and mistreatment of the LGBT community seems to extend to our own HIV community as well.

While reports that President Trump complained that all immigrants from Haiti "had AIDS" were beyond troubling, even more alarming are the steps he and his administration have taken to undermine progress to end AIDS.

In his 2018 budget request, Trump proposed, among other things:

- Cutting HIV prevention funding at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) by 19 percent
- Completely eliminating the Ryan White Program's AIDS Education and Training Centers and Special Projects of National Significance programs
- Eliminating the HHS Secretary's Minority AIDS Initiative Fund and reducing Minority AIDS Initiative programs from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Cutting the funding for Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS by $26 million.

His recent FY2019 budget request did much of the same.

His administration's strategic plan for HHS hardly references HIV or sexually transmitted infections while completely ignoring LGBT needs, failing to include a single reference to them. Trump similarly failed to mention the LGBT community's unique needs in his 2017 World AIDS Day remarks.

This culture of silence appeared to be developing into official policy when reports surfaced that staff at the CDC had been instructed not to use specific words when drafting their budget justification documents for Congress, including transgender and evidence-based, among others.

President Trump also dismissed, without any warning or explanation, all remaining members of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS last December and has not yet announced any replacements. Trump has also yet to appoint a new head of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy.

We continue to hope that this administration will recognize that providing care and prevention services for people living with and vulnerable to HIV is both a moral and public health imperative.

Join us in urging Congress to stand up to this administration's deliberate efforts to divide us, and demand fair and immediate action to protect the health of all Americans.

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