Bernie Sanders Releases an HIV/AIDS Plan That Has a $3B “Prize Fund”

March 14, 2016

U.S. Senator and presidential candidate Bernie Sanders released an HIV/AIDS platform outlining how his administration would tackle the epidemic and ensure that the 1.2 million Americans living with the virus have access to affordable drugs.

“We must do everything possible to end the greed of the pharmaceutical companies and get people the medicine they need at a price they can afford,” says Sanders in a press release for the HIV/AIDS platform. The plan is detailed on his website on a page titled Working to Create an AIDS and HIV-Free Generation.

How does Sanders plan to make this a reality? According to his platform, as president, Sanders would create a Prize Fund for HIV/AIDS worth more than $3 billion per year to be used as an incentive for medical research and drug development. The platform explains: “Instead of a system where the market is manipulated to keep out all competition, companies would be rewarded for their innovation with a cash prize for their medical innovations, rather than through the grant of a monopoly. Under Bernie’s plan, drugs would have generic competition immediately after FDA approval.”

Other items spelled out in the HIV/AIDS platform include:

- Reduce barriers that keep lower-cost drugs from entering the United States from other countries, and stop trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership that would increase prices of HIV meds in many countries
- Establish a universal health care system—in other words, a Medicare-for-all, single payer system
- Expand substance abuse and mental health services for people living with HIV or at risk for HIV

- Expand the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, which provides access to HIV-related services, and ensures that people with HIV/AIDS have access to housing
- Expand civil rights protections for LGBT people and those living with HIV
- Expand the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to double the number of people on HIV treatment globally by 2020.

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