Corporate Partners Launch New Coalition to Help End HIV in the U.S.

The U.S. Business Action to End HIV coalition boosts public-private partnerships and spells out six ways companies can fight the epidemic.

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This content is from Harold J. Phillips, MRP, Director, Office of National AIDS Policy, The White House

Since the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) was released one year ago, I've often remarked that it is a national strategy, not just a federal one, and in order to achieve the goal of ending the HIV epidemic in the U.S. by 2030 we need the participation of all sectors of society. So, for me, a highlight of last week's observance of World AIDS Day was a roundtable meeting I hosted focused on accelerating public-private partnerships to end the HIV epidemic.

The roundtable brought together representatives of a dozen companies along with several senior federal HIV leaders. I am grateful to the Health Action Alliance (HAA), the nation's largest private sector network of employers operating at the intersection of business and public health, and ViiV Healthcare for helping to convene the meeting. Together they announced at the roundtable a new coalition, U.S. Business Action to End HIV, that will harness the influence and expertise of the private sector in support of achieving the goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and ending the HIV epidemic in the United States by 2030.

In announcing the launch of the coalition, HAA's Stephen Massey remarked that in recent years, due to COVID-19, businesses and their leaders have been more engaged in public health than ever before. The new coalition is designed to continue that engagement, specifically in the HIV response. "Leaders from the private sector and HIV community have identified opportunities for employers to fill gaps and accelerate progress to help end HIV, particularly through a focus on equitable access to prevention and treatment tools," noted HAA's news release.

The initial members of U.S. Business Action to End HIV are Ada Health, Avita, BLK, Chispa, CVS Health, Gilead Sciences, Healthvana, National LGBT Chamber of Commerce, OraSure Technologies, The Powell Companies Real, Tinder, Uber, ViiV Healthcare, Walgreens, and Walmart. Representatives of those founding members joined the roundtable and shared details on their corporate commitments to accelerate our national HIV response.

The participating companies commit to one or more of the following:

- Making HIV a corporate priority and extending a call-to-action to other industry leaders;
- Educating workers and fighting HIV stigma in the workplace;
- Strengthening HIV coverage and non-discrimination policies for employees;
- Advocating for improved HIV policies and system change;
- Leveraging their capabilities to implement innovative strategies in communities most affected by HIV; and
- Providing funding to strengthen the coalition's public health response.

The new business coalition will help us respond to the NHAS' call to increase coordination with the private sector to identify and scale up best practices, accelerate HIV advances, boost efforts to provide accurate information, reach and engage key populations, and develop innovative tools.

ADM Rachel Levine, MD, Assistant Secretary for Health, kindly provided space for the meeting and welcomed participants to HHS headquarters. Also joining us for this roundtable were a number of senior federal HIV leaders including Dr. Rochelle Walensky, CDC Director; Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, Director of CDC's Division of HIV Prevention; Dr. Laura Cheever, HRSA's Associate Administrator for the HIV/AIDS Bureau; Kaye Hayes, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Infectious Diseases at HHS; RADM Michael Iademarco, MD, HHS Deputy Assistant Secretary for Science and Medicine; Rita Harcrow, Director of HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing; and Stephen Lucas, Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing at HUD. I'm grateful for the encouragement they shared about the new efforts from the business sector and for their tremendous efforts to implement the NHAS through their respective agencies/offices' programs, policies, and services.

The HAA and the coalition's member companies will be working together to expand membership in U.S. Business Action to End HIV, inviting more companies to join the movement and make their own commitments. These efforts will include a National Business Summit on HIV in early 2023.

The Health Action Alliance is a joint initiative of the Ad Council, the CDC Foundation, the de Beaumont Foundation, the National Safety Council, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation — in partnership with Meteorite.

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