What HIV Organizations Are Saying About the 2024 Election

A roundup of statements by HIV leaders who offer healing wisdom, historical references, postelection calls to action and quite a few to-do lists

November 7, 2024 By Trent Straube

The American public has voted, and the 2024 election results are in. Donald Trump is the president-elect. This is not the outcome most in the HIV community preferred. As the possible repercussions come into focus, leaders of HIV organizations have been speaking out, not just for those affected by HIV and AIDS but also for the civil rights and access to health care for African Americans, Latinos, LGBTQ people and other minorities. When read together, these statements offer a big-picture analysis of where we've been, what's at stake and how to move forward. Here's a sampling of curated comments along with social media posts:

View this post on Instagram

A post shared by San Francisco AIDS Foundation (@sfaidsfound)

In a blog post titled "This is not a defeat of our movement: A post-election call to action," Tyler TerMeer, PhD, the CEO at San Francisco AIDS Foundation, laid out why people in the HIV community feel threatened and alarmed. "To those around the country who supported this outcome and to those who did not vote, let me be direct: your choices have a real and painful impact on the lives of people we serve, the people who work and volunteer at SFAF, and on me personally. This election result is not an abstraction; it means greater barriers for people living with HIV, higher risks for LGBTQ+ individuals, and more challenges for people who rely on harm reduction services. It means that vulnerable communities—especially Black, Brown, and queer communities—must once again fight for their right to exist, to be treated with dignity, and to receive care without judgment. We must also confront the anti-Blackness embedded in this political shift, which threatens to unravel hard-won progress in racial justice, criminal justice reform, and health equity. This is a reminder that voting is never just an individual choice—it impacts people's lives, families, and futures.

"But as we face what may feel like an uphill journey, let's remember to have grace for ourselves and one another. The history of LGBTQ rights and the HIV movement teaches us that real change requires endurance."

Robin Gay, DMD, the interim president and CEO of Howard Brown Health in Chicago also referenced history in her statement, "We Will Survive This Together." "When we were founded in 1974, legal protections for the marginalized communities we serve simply did not exist," she wrote. "We have survived in spite of that for 50 years now and will continue to for at least another 50. We will ensure that our communities continue to receive the care they need. No matter what is thrown at us, we will withstand it. We will ensure that we can grow old together."

We will always have each other.

Since the beginning of the HIV epidemic, our community has faced countless trials and obstacles. In the past we have been forced to endure discrimination, death and loss that shook our spirits and left us reeling. But we have always found a way… pic.twitter.com/xJTfstvlgY

— AIDS United (@AIDSUnited) November 6, 2024

In a press statement titled "AIDS United Calls for Vigilance as the Political Landscape Shifts," the national organization began: "Every election changes the political landscape. These changes will impact the ways we advocate and live our lives, but they do not alter the goals we seek to achieve." AIDS United, which works with over 60 organizations on policy, added: "In the wake of President-elect Trump's first victory in 2016, more than 600 HIV advocates came together in that following year's AIDSWatch to fight for one another in the largest and most impactful HIV advocacy event in our history. We worked with policymakers to turn a moment of uncertainty into a call for justice and an opportunity for progress, protecting the Affordable Care Act and helping usher in the Ending the HIV Epidemic initiative that has significantly lowered HIV transmission rates and provided care to tens of thousands of people living with HIV. We must once again unite in solidarity to protect our communities and forge a new path forward."

NMAC leaders Harold Phillips and Paul Kawata sent an email titled "Stay the Course for the HIV Movement" that reassured people of its mission: "Our commitment to achieving health equity through racial justice frameworks to end the HIV epidemic has and will not change. Our advocacy and strategic approach to the work will remain intentional and continue to be ushered by the needs of the communities we serve.… Our movement is at another crossroads. While it might feel desperate, it is not hopeless. We are a movement of heroes who changed the world. In the face of the impossible, we made it happen then, and we can do it again now."

"We don't agonize. We organize."

National AIDS Memorial CEO John Cunningham addressed our community today with a moving message that addresses our new reality and harkens to past resilience amidst health and social justice: https://t.co/JNwDIKJzNe pic.twitter.com/9khPtyZAML

— National AIDS Memorial (@aids_memorial) November 6, 2024

"I wanted to reach out to remind you that you are not alone—you are part of a strong, beautiful, and resilient community," began John B. Cunningham, CEO of the National AIDS Memorial, home to

the AIDS Quilt and other initiatives, in a letter addressed "Dear Loving Community." Amid pleas for community motivation and love, he got personal. "We must be clear-eyed about what is in front of us, and know that our way of life, and our systems of government, are at risk, and thus the stability of our society is at a precarious point. Together we must work to create a path forward—one rooted in the values of the nation we once knew and, today, don't recognize or feel a part of.

"I know firsthand, as a man living with AIDS and in recovery, what it means to be at a crossroads of despair vs. hope. I AGAIN choose hope and ask each of you to do the same, while also understanding that it will wane at times, and we will vacillate between hope and despair. I find hope in each of you—knowing that we ARE on the right side of history and that our work to advance health, racial, and social justice continues. We must stand with, and fight for, our women, Queer and transgender community members, those who are Black, brown, immigrants, and Dreamers—for we are all in this together."

The HIV+Hepatitis Policy Institute noted the previous Trump administration's history with the HIV community. "In his 2019 State of the Union address, Trump announced that we would 'eliminate the HIV epidemic in the United States within 10 years.' This led to the historic Ending the HIV Epidemic [EHE] initiative that increases HIV testing, treatment and prevention programs, including scaling up PrEP [pre-exposure prophylaxis], which are drugs that prevent HIV. At the same time, his administration proposed cuts to other HIV and health programs and proposed to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, including its nondiscrimination protections," wrote Carl Schmid, executive director of HIV+Hep, who also noted: "In recent years, House Republicans have proposed to eliminate funding for the [EHE] program.

"Ending HIV and hepatitis cannot happen without a comprehensive health care system that includes robust private insurance, Medicaid and Medicare programs, upholding nondiscrimination protections, and combating stigma and disparities. Health care access and affordability, particularly for prescription drugs, are critically important. We will continue to fight to ensure all payers provide the drugs people need at a price they can afford. Of immediate concern for the new administration will be ensuring that co-pay assistance patients receive to afford their drugs will count toward their out-of-pocket cost obligations."

Similarly, The AIDS Institute laid out specific goals to be accomplished while working with the incoming Trump administration. The national nonprofit, which fights for people affected by HIV, AIDS, hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections, wrote in a press statement: "We hope to continue and expand the investment that began in 2019 when President Trump created the Ending HIV Epidemic (EHE) initiative. As one of the community organizations that worked with the federal government to ensure the passage and launch of this historic program, we are still invested in its long-term success and expansion.

"In addition to continued investment in the EHE initiative, The AIDS Institute strongly urges President Trump to immediately address the following priorities as part of a new administration's HIV/AIDS strategy: restoring and expanding access to health care for people living with HIV through critical health initiatives; upholding the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, which is essential

for the care and support of millions of people living with HIV; increasing federal funding for HIV prevention and education programs, including those aimed at reducing new HIV infections through harm reduction efforts; reaffirming a commitment to ending the HIV, hepatitis, and STD [sexually transmitted diseases] epidemics through robust funding and policy actions, ensuring that marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, and people of color, have access to the care they need."

Doug Wirth, the CEO of Amida Care, a nonprofit health plan that provides gender-affirming and HIV care in New York City, wrote: "The shift in power in Washington reinforces our need to be vigilant in advocating for our members' rights, pushing back against threats like Medicaid block grants and restrictive employment requirements that could undermine access to care and our ability to end the HIV epidemic. We've faced threats to our health care and our freedoms before; our communities are resilient, and we'll get through this. We will continue to fight for the vital federal funding needed to serve communities impacted by HIV, and for queer and trans rights and health care."

Lambda Legal, which advocates in the courts for the civil rights of those in the LGBTQ and HIV communities, sent an email highlighting the related concerns of transgender and nonbinary young people and offered a potential balm (and video). "In times like these, it's okay to feel scared or overwhelmed. We should not forget the fierce power of community. We find strength in each other – in our chosen family, our friends, and the allies who stand with us.

"Our Speak OUT campaign asked trans and nonbinary people — some of them plaintiffs in our lawsuits — what community means to them and this is what they shared: We lift each other up, we hold each other close, and we are never alone. We got us." (By the way, Lambda Legal is organizing a postelection update call on Tuesday, November 12. Click here to register and for more information.)

"We must brace ourselves for a new wave of challenges," wrote the Latino Commission on AIDS in an email blast headlined "2024 U.S. Election: United We Can." "We have faced some of these challenges before. However, let us be clear—our work continues, our values stand firm, and our commitment grows stronger daily. Today, as we process what this means for the communities we serve, let us remind ourselves of our organizational flexibility and unbreakable commitment to social justice.

"Let us focus on hope and action. Let us lean on one another and remember that, together, we work to make our nation a better place for all. Our power is our commitment, dedication, strength, and courage. We will face every challenge with determination and perseverance. We will emerge stronger."

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/hiv-organizations-saying-2024-election