IAS Head Says Swine Flu, Poor Economy Must Not Distract From HIV

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Julio Montaner, MD, head of the International AIDS Society (IAS), called on members of the World Health Assembly—who met in Geneva last week—to remain focused on fighting HIV/AIDS worldwide despite concern over the flagging global economy and the spread of H1N1 (swine flu), Voice of America News reports.

“We need to put things into the proper perspective,” Montaner said from Vancouver. “No doubt that SARS, avian flu or whatever new flew or any other epidemic that may show up the day after tomorrow…is something that we need to respond to. But it cannot be at the expense of a proven, established killer.”

Montaner added that he is disappointed that President Barack Obama’s proposed funding for global AIDS programs falls short of his campaign promises.

“But on that same note, we would like to remind people that the leaders of the G8 countries, including my own prime minister in Canada, have failed to deliver according to their promises,” he said. “And all we are asking is that they refocus their efforts, meet their commitments.”

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