Doctors Without Borders: Global Recession Hurting the Fight Against AIDS

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The economic crisis and donor pressure to divert funds to other disease categories are hindering the global response to HIV/AIDS, said Doctors Without Borders, also known as Medecins San Frontieres (MSF), at a November 5 news conference, The Associated Press reports.

“We are at a very dangerous turning point,” said Tido von Schoen-Angerer, MD, director of MSF’s campaign to provide essential medicines. “The donors are getting cold feet about commitment to long-term, chronic disease.”

According to the article, directors from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria—which provides a quarter of all international AIDS financing—are expected to decide next week whether economic shortfalls will prevent them from funding new programs. Additionally, the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)—launched in 2003 by former President George W. Bush—will keep funding at current levels for the next two years despite an increasing need for aid.

Schoen-Angerer added that many HIV funding donors have told him that they would rather target “cheap and easy” illnesses that do not require lifelong and often expensive drug regimens.

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