NY State Task Force Finishes Plan to End AIDS by 2020

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Last year, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo asked that a group be created to draw up a blueprint to end AIDS in the Empire State by 2020. This week, the Ending the Epidemic Task Force completed its plan, according to a Housing Works press release.

Charles King, the CEO of Housing Works, co-chaired the state task force along with Guthrie Birkhead, MD, MPH, a deputy commissioner with the state health department. The group is made up of more than 70 activists, researchers and health service providers.

The task force created “a visionary package,” said King in the release. “Ending New York’s epidemic means reducing new HIV infections from over 3,000 last year to under 750 in 2020 and ending HIV-related deaths. Reaching these goals will require dramatic scale-up of high-quality combination HIV prevention, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), universal health coverage and primary care, scaled-up HIV testing, and full uptake of HIV treatment, to enable at least 85 percent of HIV-positive New Yorkers to achieve and sustain optimal health through an undetectable viral load.”

“The governor has allowed the task force to work in freedom,” said Mark Harrington, executive director of Treatment Action Group and the co-chair of the task force’s Data Committee. “We were never muzzled or told not to include something. The governor has already taken steps we were planning on recommending, such as requiring Medicaid and private insurance coverage for transgender health care.

Harrington added: “Now it will be up to the state legislature and local leaders to provide the support and necessary resources to achieve the vision laid out by Governor Cuomo and the task force.”

For more about the task force, click here.

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