U.S. Freezes HIV Treatment Spending in Africa, Shifts Focus to Prevention

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The Obama administration is freezing spending on HIV treatment in several African countries and is instead shifting its focus to HIV prevention, *Agence France-Presse* reports. In response, activists and health officials say they are concerned about reversing the gains made against global HIV/AIDS since 2003, when former president George W. Bush launched the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

According to the article, HIV-positive patients enrolled in PEPFAR programs will continue receiving free antiretroviral therapy under the spending freeze, but clinics are being forced to turn away new patients.

Peter Mugyenyi, head of Uganda's Joint Clinical Research Center, accused the United States of breaking its promise to Uganda, " The No. 1 thing is availability of treatment," he said. "Any other program, whatever name they call it, will fail."

HIV specialist Eric Goemaere, MD, with Doctors Without Borders, said that spending PEPFAR funds on prevention in an effort to slow the HIV/AIDS epidemic is a "fake argument," adding that an effective prevention strategy relies on testing.

"Why were people getting tests? It is because treatment was available," he said.

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