Trump’s “Global Gag Rule” Threatens International Progress Fighting HIV

A new analysis identified hundreds of HIV organizations in scores of nations that could be affected.

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Donald Trump’s January 2017 reinstatement of the so-called Mexico City Policy, or “global gag rule,” poses a threat to organizations around the world that are fighting the HIV epidemic, aidsmap reports.

The policy was first implemented by Ronald Reagan and then rescinded and reinstated by every subsequent Democratic and Republican president, respectively. It forbids U.S. aid to support organizations that provide information about or referrals to legal abortion or that provide abortion services.

The U.S. President’s Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief’s (PEPFAR) spending is subject to this policy. Researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation sought to determine the scope of global organizations that receive PEPFAR money and that would be compromised by the global gag rule. They presented their findings at the International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam (AIDS 2018).

The researchers analyzed data from the United States Agency for International Development covering 2013 to 2015. They identified 470 foreign nongovernment organizations (NGOs) that receive $873 million from PEPFAR that would be affected by the global gag rule as well as 274 U.S. NGOs that receive $5.5 billion from the program.

PEPFAR supports programs in 61 nations, including 36 that have laws supporting abortion that conflict with the gag rule in at least one way.

It remains unclear at this time exactly how many foreign NGOs provide services that would subject them to the Mexico City Policy and prompt them to discontinue such efforts in order to become compliant.

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