Lancet Looks at 4 Finalists for UNAIDS Ex. Director

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An editorial in the October 18 edition of medical journal *The Lancet* examines four individuals the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board recommended to replace the organization's executive director Peter Piot, Kaisernetwork.org reports. Piot held the position since 1995 and has been credited with raising "the profile of HIV/AIDS so successfully that the epidemic has remained a high priority on health, political and security agendas," according to the editorial.

UNAIDS established a search committee immediately after Piot announced his resignation in June, The Lancet reports. After interviewing seven candidates from 117 applicants, the board chose four.

The candidates to succeed Piot are: Tim Barnett, who has been a Labour Party member of Parliament in New Zealand since 1996; Stefano Bertozzi, an HIV researcher and founding director of the Division of Health Economics and Policy at Mexico's National Institute of Public Health; Michel Sidibe, the deputy executive director for UNAIDS; and Debrework Zewdie; the director of the Global HIV/AIDS Program at the World Bank.

"It is time to unwind the rhetoric and reposition the response to HIV/AIDS as one of several important health challenges," the editorial concludes. "A view beyond HIV/AIDS will reinforce plurality and justice, protecting minorities and thus wider majorities. …The new executive director will need to work with others from the non-HIV world and be big on prevention and access to all essential medicines, including antiretrovirals."

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