



U.S. Funding Cuts Threaten HIV Treatment and Prevention

One study found that halting PEPFAR funding for PrEP could lead to more than 6,600 additional HIV cases over a year in sub-Saharan Africa.

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The International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference on HIV Science in July included the usual gamut of HIV prevention, treatment and cure research, but the Trump administration's cuts to foreign aid overshadowed the proceedings. According to this year's UNAIDS annual update, an estimated 1.3 million people acquired HIV in 2024, and more than 9 million people living with HIV were not on lifesaving treatment—numbers that are only expected to worsen.

Soon after his inauguration, President Donald Trump slashed funding for the U.S. Agency for International Development, which oversees PEPFAR, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Prevention funding was limited to pregnant and breastfeeding women, and HIV care has been sharply curtailed. "This is not just a funding gap—it's a ticking time bomb," says UNAIDS executive director Winnie Byanyima. "We have seen services vanish overnight."

A study from Mozambique showed a 25% reduction in the number of adults starting antiretroviral treatment in February 2025 compared with the same month last year. A modeling study found that halting PEPFAR funding for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) could lead to more than 6,600 additional HIV cases over a year in sub-Saharan Africa. What's more, deep cuts to HIV research funding threaten future advances.

This year's conference in Rwanda took place at a paradoxical moment, according to IAS President Beatriz Grinsztejn, MD, MPH. "On the one hand, we're witnessing extraordinary scientific breakthroughs that could transform prevention and treatment and even bring us closer to a cure," she says. "On the other hand, these very advances are under threat from massive funding cuts that risk stalling clinical trials, slowing our progress and jeopardizing the progress we've fought so hard to achieve."

