



AIDSWatch 2026 Galvanizes Hundreds of Advocates on Capitol Hill to Demand Action on HIV Epidemic

“Progress in the fight against HIV does not happen by accident; it requires sustained political will,” says AIDS United’s Carl Baloney Jr.

March 31, 2026 By [AIDS United](#)

AIDS United successfully concluded AIDSWatch 2026, the nation’s largest annual HIV advocacy event, bringing nearly 600 advocates from 42 states and territories to Washington, D.C. for three days of intensive policy education and direct engagement with nearly 250 Congressional offices. The event underscored the urgent need for federal action to address critical issues impacting people living with and vulnerable to HIV.

“Defending Progress, Demanding Justice” — the theme that guided advocates as they confronted lawmakers on the most pressing issues facing the HIV community.

Policy Priorities Discussed

AIDSWatch 2026 participants directly discussed pressing policy priorities with Members of Congress and their staffs, including ensuring access to treatment and a high quality of life for all people living with HIV; mitigating the impact of federal funding cuts and attacks on vulnerable communities; supporting HIV prevention efforts and increased PrEP access across the country; and maintaining robust U.S. support for the global HIV response.

“AIDSWatch 2026 was a powerful demonstration of collective advocacy at a pivotal moment for the HIV movement. Our advocates came to Washington not just to observe, but to demand that their voices be heard. They made it unequivocally clear that progress in the fight against HIV does not happen by accident; it requires sustained political will and unwavering commitment to justice.”

— Carl Baloney, Jr., President & CEO, AIDS United

Event Highlights

- Direct Engagement: Nearly 250 meetings held with Congressional offices, emphasizing the

human impact of HIV policy.

- Comprehensive Training: Six institutes focused on priority issue areas, including a New Advocate Training sponsored by ViiV Healthcare.
- Historic Inclusion: Two workshops conducted entirely in Spanish, with live translation available in several others.
- Capitol Hill Rally: Advocates gathered on the lawn of the U.S. Capitol, hearing from seasoned advocates including Joseph White (AIDS United), Asia Russell (Health GAP), Maxx Boykin (PrEP4All/SHF), Daniel Franzese (Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation), and Gabriel San Emeterio (U.S. PLHIV Caucus).
- Policy Education: Participants received comprehensive guidance from the AIDSWatch 2026 Policy Brief, available in both English and Spanish.

About AIDS United

AIDS United's mission is to end the AIDS epidemic in the United States through strategic grantmaking, capacity building, and policy advocacy. Learn more at aidsunited.org

About AIDSWatch

AIDSWatch is the largest national HIV advocacy event, bringing together hundreds of people living with HIV and their allies to educate members of Congress about the importance of federal funding and sound policies to address the HIV epidemic. AIDSWatch is presented by AIDS United in coordination with the U.S. People Living with HIV Caucus and the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation at Harvard Law School.

[This press release](#) was originally published March 30, 2026, by AIDS United. For additional AIDSWatch 2026 coverage, including a list of honorees, see this [previous press release](#) and [this POZ article](#).