Five Steps the Biden-Harris Team Can Take Right Now to Help End HIV

In the first 100 days, they must undo the harmful and discriminatory policies of the Trump administration.

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The first 100 days of the Biden-Harris administration mark a unique opportunity to revitalize efforts to end the HIV epidemic in the United States. This new administration begins as our country is in the midst of devastating political and public health crises. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all sectors of American life, widening inequalities and threatening to undo years of progress toward ending the HIV epidemic. At the same time, attacks on the U.S. Capitol by domestic terrorists urged on by members of our own government have left the nation in a state of shock.

In order to end the HIV epidemic by 2025, the Biden-Harris administration must commit to undoing the harmful policies of the Trump administration and to creating a public health system that protects the well-being of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, people of color, transgender, low-income, uninsured and underinsured peoples across the United States in the first 100 days in office.

Dismantling the multitude of harmful executive orders and rules put in place by the Trump administration must be a priority to address the rampant discrimination they have allowed in the health care system. These orders have barred people living with HIV and transgender identifying people from participating in the military. They have also prevented HIV service organizations from engaging in racial sensitivity training and providing culturally competent care. Ending these policies on day one is critical to ensure that populations most vulnerable to harm are protected and HIV service organizations can continue their work to end the HIV epidemic.

The new administration must also work harder to uplift communities most impacted by HIV. These communities include Black people, people of color, sex workers, people who use drugs, trans people, immigrants and people experiencing homelessness.

Concrete steps the administration should take include:

- Declaring that racism is a public health issue.

- Preventing evictions and providing significant relief for those who are financially struggling

during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Reestablishing the Office of National AIDS Policy and making sure it is led by someone who is living with HIV and who has significant experience working with the HIV community.

- Protect LGBTQ+ populations from discrimination by undoing harmful policies and regulations instituted by the Trump administration and working with Congress to pass the Equality Act.

- Dedicate substantial new federal funding to support syringe services programs and other harm reduction providers.

The Biden-Harris administration should also make sure that people living with HIV and those that are most vulnerable to HIV are directly represented in the administration and throughout the federal government's HIV-related programs.

Further, the Biden-Harris administration should adopt a national strategy to ensure broad and equitable access to effective HIV prevention, care and treatment. The administration should enhance the Ryan White HIV/AIDS funding program for communities most impacted by HIV and continue to fund access to essential services (transportation, food, nutrition, linguistic services, case management, housing services, etc.) for program recipients. Also, they must fund and scale up PrEP, PEP and treatment-as-prevention services and messaging for priority HIV populations.

Lastly, they must make sustained multi-year increases for HIV/AIDS research funding. This is not only important to develop innovative solutions to ending the HIV epidemic by 2025 but also because HIV research has been critical in the country's efforts to end the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ending the HIV epidemic in the United States is within our grasp. AIDS United looks forward to the opportunity to work with the Biden-Harris administration to bring an end to the epidemic by 2025.

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