“Harm Reduction Futures Fund” Launches to Support Syringe Services

AIDS United spearheads the rebranded Harm Reduction Futures Fund to also prevent HIV, viral hepatitis and overdoses.

April 25, 2022 By AIDS United

On April 7, AIDS United announced the launch of the Harm Reduction Futures Fund, a refresh of the mission and vision of its nearly two decades of harm reduction grantmaking. Building upon nearly two decades of the Syringe Access Fund’s support for harm reduction programs across the United States, the Harm Reduction Futures Fund will facilitate funding to community-based syringe services programs—the cornerstones of harm reduction—that desperately need resources to provide life-saving services.

“For nearly two decades, the Syringe Access Fund has stepped in where leaders have refused to act to support people who use drugs,” said Jesse Milan Jr., president and CEO of AIDS United. “Syringe service programs are a proven and cost-effective HIV and hepatitis prevention tool. These services are frequently the only link for people who use drugs to treatment programs as well as other public health, medical and social services. The Harm Reduction Futures Fund focuses us clearly on our goal: a future with an end to the HIV and overdose epidemics founded in compassion and care.”

“The new name better reflects the breadth of what we have evolved to do and what we could resource with increased funding.”

Check out this article about the launch of the Harm Reduction Futures Fund by our own Christine Rodriguez in @Filtermag_org. https://t.co/uhufx63phn

— AIDS United (@AIDS_United) April 22, 2022

“As we looked to the next year of the Syringe Access Fund, we realized that we needed to reposition ourselves to meet the existential threats harm reduction is facing from widespread stigma, misunderstanding and co-optation,” said Christine Rodriguez, AIDS United senior program manager, harm reduction. “With the Harm Reduction Futures Fund, our mission is clear: We fund hope for a different future for people who use drugs, and the work of those who are at this very moment turning imagination into reality. A future without (preventable) HIV or viral hepatitis infection. A future without (preventable) fatal overdose. A future with compassion for people who use drugs, which upholds their human rights, dignity and humanity—without judgment or coercion.”

“The overdose and HIV epidemics are two of the most pressing public health challenges of our time—and they are increasingly intertwined,” said Marc Meachem, the head of U.S. External Affairs at ViiV Healthcare. “The nation’s broader responses to these public health crises don’t often consider the support needs of people who use drugs. By contributing to the Syringe Access Fund and now the Harm Reduction Futures Fund, we seek to ensure those closest to the community are given the tools they need to expand access to resources and services for those most marginalized and most in need.”

The Syringe Access Fund was established in 2004 as a collaborative grantmaking initiative of various private foundations, corporations and public charities. AIDS United has successfully managed the fund since 2009. Since its inception, the Syringe Access Fund has awarded more than $15 million through more than 500 grants to programs in 43 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands—impacting countless lives through access to sterile syringes and compassionate care.

The mission of the Harm Reduction Futures Fund remains the same as it was nearly two decades ago: to reduce the health, psychosocial and socioeconomic disparities experienced by people who use drugs. To that end, the fund invests in evidence-based and community-driven approaches to prevent the transmission of both HIV and viral hepatitis, reduce injection-related injuries, increase overdose prevention and reversal efforts and connect people who use drugs to comprehensive prevention, treatment and support services. We are grateful for the continued support of ViiV Healthcare and the Levi Strauss Foundation that makes this work possible.

To learn more about how to support the Harm Reduction Futures Fund as we begin our new chapter in funding this crucial work, reach out to Christine Rodriguez, senior program manager, at crodriguez@aidsunited.org.

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