



A Letter to the HIV Community: How We Win

As we look to 2026, AIDS United's CEO Carl Baloney Jr. urges us to choose solidarity over separation and to support public health policies.

December 24, 2025 By [AIDS United](#)

This post is by Carl Baloney Jr., president and CEO at AIDS United.

We are at a pivotal moment for the HIV movement and for public health in America. For decades, political leaders disagreed on many things, but there was a broad understanding that protecting the nation's health was a shared responsibility. Administrations were judged, in part, on how well they navigated health crises.

That consensus has weakened. Health care remains a top concern for people across the country, yet federal and state policymakers often treat HIV and health equity as afterthoughts.

This year, World AIDS Day arrived just as the government ended a six-week shutdown sparked by a dispute over whether millions of Americans should continue receiving tax credits under the Affordable Care Act. For communities living with HIV, for those most at risk, and for the providers who support them, this was not a symbolic fight. It created real fear and uncertainty for people already navigating unstable health systems.

We also face a deeper moral challenge. Too often, we see public health through the narrow lens of our own families and circumstances. It is easy to assume HIV will never touch our lives, or that it is an issue limited to "other people." Leaders sometimes reinforce this mindset, and the policies that follow reflect it — leaving the most affected communities with the least protection.

Our own movement is not immune to this fragmentation. As we confront proposed federal cuts to HIV programs, major Medicaid changes that could leave millions uninsured and a public health infrastructure still strained from the pandemic, we cannot afford to operate in silos.

The HIV movement has long been guided by the phrase "Nothing about us without us." It is more than a demand for representation. It is a reminder that our strength lies in collective action. Our fight has always included reproductive health advocates, racial justice organizers, LGBTQ leaders and faith communities. We know that when those with the least access receive the care and dignity they deserve, everyone benefits.

As we look beyond World AIDS Day, I'm asking advocates, policymakers, philanthropists and community partners to choose solidarity over separation. Stand with the communities most impacted. Push back against policies that weaken public health. Use your voice to help build a future where the health of people with the fewest resources is treated as a national priority, not an afterthought.

That is how we protect one another — and that is how we win

This letter was originally published December 22, 2025, by [AIDS United](#). Carl Baloney Jr. and Jesse Milan Jr. are currently featured on the cover of POZ. [Click here to read their interviews.](#)

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/letter-hiv-community-win>