# Open Letter To HIV Funders

Now more than ever the HIV community needs our donors to stand with us.

March 25, 2020 By Paul Kawata

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Thank you for your decades of support. For all nonprofits, these are scary and difficult times. Now more than ever the HIV community needs our donors to stand with us. Without your continued support, the infrastructure created to provide services and to end the HIV epidemic could be decimated. There is natural inclination to hit “pause” to see where everything falls; however, it could be too late if you wait too long.

Last week the AIDS/LifeCycle was canceled. This is one of the nation’s largest HIV fundraisers. The AIDS Walk of New York is on May 17th and I truly wonder if it can happen. Without these and many other fundraising events, our infrastructure is truly at risk. We need all of our donors to understand that this is not the year to “skip” HIV.

I don’t want to pit us against other nonprofits and diseases, because it’s going to be tough for everyone. That is why HIV specific donors are so important to our movement’s survival. In the past year, we have seen an uptick in HIV service organizations having to close their doors, especially those who specifically serve racial/ethnic minorities. Given the economics of COVID-19, whole industries could go bankrupt in addition to our sister agencies. This is the trickle-down challenge for development. Marriott is going to have a very difficult year. They are a huge supporter of LGBTQ Prides; however, they just let Prides know not to count on them this year. While completely understandable, Marriott’s decision leaves us just starting to sort out the impact on nonprofits. Broadway Cares, a key donor to HIV services, can’t raise money when Broadway is closed.

Not all businesses will be equally impacted. The pharmaceutical industry could come out of this relatively unscathed. Even with the social isolation, people still need to take their meds, particularly people living with HIV. In fact, HHS is recommending that all PLHIV have a 90-day supply of their meds and stay updated on their vaccinations. NMAC is calling on HIV pharma, as one of the industries that will not be destroyed, to step-up and double their 2020 contributions to HIV organizations.

I know there will be some who will be upset about this request, but what is our alternative? Individual donors and mainstream corporations will be pulled in a million different directions and HIV will be one of multiple issues they must address. I don’t believe there is enough money from non-HIV funders to fill the gaps that COVID-19 will cause to our work.

To all of the HIV donors, thank you for your decades of support. If you believe there needs to be

infrastructure to support people living with HIV, then stand with our movement and consider the following:

- Double your 2020 giving
- Give multiyear unrestricted funding
- Simplify the application process, and
- At least for now, minimize the reports that are required.

There will be a time when COVID-19 is a lesson for our history books and our movement will remember who stood with us during these difficult times. I am very concerned about what will be left when COVID-19 is over. We need your commitments now to weather the economic storm that is coming. Thank you.

Yours in the struggle,

Paul Kawata

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/open-letter-hiv-funders