Who Will Represent HIV Issues in the Biden Administration?

The president-elect committed to reinstating the Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP). What skills and priorities must its leader possess? Let's discuss.

December 9, 2020 By Paul Kawata

Last week President-elect Biden officially committed to reinstating the Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP) at the White House. Now is the time for the HIV community to weigh-in, particularly since this leader will be the President's representative in our struggle to end the HIV epidemic (EHE) in America. NMAC hopes the Biden administration will consider ending HIV as an integral component of their commitment to racial justice in America.

Here are some of the critical skills that NMAC hopes for the leader of ONAP:

- Integrate EHE efforts with the Biden administration's commitment to Black Lives Matter,
- Passionate leader living with HIV from community,
- Expand office to focus on the syndemic epidemics of HIV, STDs, and Hepatitis,
- Work with the Office of Budget and Management (OMB) and Congress to ensure full funding of EHE efforts,
- Understand the complexities and challenges of HIV Implementation Science,
- Use the imprimatur of the White House to bring community and federal agencies together to figure out real EHE solutions,

- Full and active voice on the Domestic Policy Council,

- Voice in the HIV movement for the President, and

- Voice of the HIV movement in the White House.

This list is far from comprehensive. What would you add? Let me know because NMAC is writing another letter to the Biden transition team this week. However, our work cannot be limited to ONAP. The President-Elect has already begun announcing his nomination for senior leadership roles and will appoint new leaders immediately after the inauguration. The civil servants will craft not only the way that we do business in Washington, DC, but also how America will function both domestically and around the world. We want to encourage each of you to get involved in building our country — from employment to advocacy. Our voices and our bodies are needed to End the HIV Epidemic. Now is our time.

Yours in the struggle,

Paul Kawata

NMAC

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