Read the Memo HIV Leaders Sent to the Biden-Harris Team

The Act Now: End AIDS Coalition outlines how the Biden-Harris team can address the HIV, sexually transmitted infections, viral hepatitis and overdose syndemics.

December 28, 2020 By AIDS United

President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will face some of the most daunting health care challenges ever faced by an incoming presidential administration when they are sworn into office on Jan. 20.

2020 has seen the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed over 315,000 people in the United States and disrupted virtually every aspect of American life, leaving millions jobless, homeless or unable to feed themselves and their families.

At the same time, the overdose epidemic, which was already devastating before COVID-19, has reached new lows as access to vital health care services for people who use drugs have decreased and the mental health of millions suffered from the stressors of the pandemic.

For HIV service providers and community health centers, operating during the pandemic has been a struggle as resources were siphoned away to address COVID-19. Also, their ability to serve people living with and affected by HIV was greatly altered by the safety measures that were necessary to contain the pandemic's spread.

The Biden-Harris administration will inherit a nation in crisis, but it will also find itself leading a nation with reason to hope.

After unprecedented efforts and investment from scientists, governments and the private sector, an entire wave of new COVID-19 vaccines are being released and containment of this deadly virus is finally on the horizon.

We have also never been in a better position to end the HIV epidemic in the United States as we are now. Thanks to the vision of the original National HIV/AIDS Strategy that was created by the Obama-Biden administration and to the increased resources for HIV-related programs as part of the outgoing administration's Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America, or EHE, the federal government is well-positioned to make the investment necessary to bring about an end to the HIV, STI, viral hepatitis and overdose syndemics.

AIDS United and our partners at the Act Now: End AIDS Coalition recently sent a memo to the Biden-Harris transition team outlining what we expect from them in terms of their commitment to ending the HIV epidemic in the United States while simultaneously addressing the intersecting STI, viral hepatitis and overdose syndemics.

We wrote, in part:

> The next administration must elevate EHE and honor the work HIV leaders have put into the initiative thus far, while assuring that community is truly at the center of the next federal strategy. The 2020 World AIDS Day statement from Biden-Harris leaves us hopeful that together, the HIV community and incoming administration can create a robust plan to end the HIV epidemic in all communities across this country by 2025. The biomedical outcomes laid out in the nation's current EHE initiative can only be achieved through the simultaneous prioritization and protection of the health and rights of people living with HIV (PLHIV) and vulnerable to the virus. The EHE Initiative creates a framework to end HIV in this country; its next iteration needs to work in compliment to advocacy for universal health coverage, racial health equity, housing assistance, food security, and must address all social determinants of health.
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> AIDS United and the Act Now: End AIDS Coalition look forward to hearing from the incoming Biden-Harris administration about their plans to end the HIV epidemic in the U.S. by 2025 and will do everything in our power to ensure that this goal is achieved.

Read the full memo.

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