



March 9, 2012

The Honorable President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20502
United States of America

Dear President Obama,

We write to thank you for your commitment to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States and globally, and to acknowledge the National HIV/AIDS Strategy's (NHAS) recognition that addressing stigma and discrimination is central to reaching this goal. In the year and months since you issued the NHAS, you have been clear about your administration's intention to make "zero new HIV infections and zero AIDS deaths" a reality.

While we appreciate the bold vision of an AIDS-free generation that you outlined on World AIDS Day, we are concerned that your focus on biomedical interventions has sidelined the civil and human rights issues that go hand in glove with effective HIV prevention, treatment, and care. We believe it is time for a parallel, unqualified commitment to zero HIV discrimination here in the United States, and ask that you use the occasion of the 2012 International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012) to deliver a keynote address on AIDS that makes that commitment explicit.

The HIV pandemic will never end while the basic rights of people living with HIV to competent care, opportunities for employment and decent housing, autonomy and respect in decisions related to medical and reproductive health care, and fair treatment in the criminal and civil justice systems are ignored. The pandemic is fueled by racial disparities, gender inequality, poverty, violence and the laws, policies, and practices that perpetuate social injustice. Indeed, the text of the NHAS reflects this. It is time to transform words into concrete action.

We therefore ask that you use the historic occasion of the International AIDS Conference's return to the United States to assure those gathered from around the world of your administration's commitment to human rights by:

1. Underscoring the importance of addressing stigma and discrimination against people affected by HIV and reporting on specific progress on that front, particularly as concerns women, men, youth of color in the U.S., transgender persons, men who have sex with men, sex workers, intravenous drug users, those who are incarcerated, and undocumented persons.
2. Reaffirming that the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls are universally-accepted human rights, including the right of women living with HIV to have a child and access to the information necessary to make an informed decision regarding childbearing, and that comprehensive contraceptive coverage and access to quality sexual and reproductive health services, including access to abortion care for women with low incomes, are included in those rights.
3. Calling for a woman-centered approach to health care that is comprehensive and links health, social, and support services routinely used by women, including: family planning, maternal health, HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care; violence prevention and counseling (including

intimate partner and sexual assault), prison and re-entry programs, and financial assistance programs. It should also affirm the specific needs of women living with HIV by integrating all these services into HIV treatment and care.

4. Recognizing that access to female condoms, which remain the only available woman-initiated dual-protection method that prevents HIV transmission and allows women to plan their families, is a necessary component of creating an AIDS-free generation.
5. Announcing the end of HIV criminalization in the United States, and declaring this administration's intention to work for the elimination of federal and state laws and practices that single out, stigmatize, and harshly punish people living with HIV by criminalizing HIV nondisclosure, exposure, and transmission in the United States.
6. Calling for all prison and detention facilities, including those for youth and undocumented persons, to provide access to essential HIV prevention and treatment interventions, uphold the sexual and reproductive rights of incarcerated people, and facilitate linkages to HIV care and treatment upon reentry.
7. Outlining current plans for elimination of HIV health care disparities that include training of health care providers and increased civil rights law enforcement to address the myriad race, gender, socioeconomic, and geographic inequities that uniquely affect the health outcomes of women, people of color, and LGBTQ individuals.
8. Announcing the end of HIV-based exclusions and penalties imposed by federal agencies on training programs and employment opportunities, including the exclusion of individuals living with HIV from serving our country in the military.

Mr. President, your administration's commitment to HIV prevention and treatment, as well as women's reproductive health and rights has been exemplary, through your introduction of the Global Health Initiative and its woman- and girl- centered approach, continued support of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the development of the first-ever national AIDS strategy in the U.S., and support for women's health in the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. We ask that you elevate the global and national response to the HIV pandemic by prioritizing a central factor in ending it: recognition of the human rights of all persons at risk of and living with HIV.

Respectfully,

30 for 30 Campaign
African Services Committee
AIDS Alabama
AIDS Project of Central Iowa
AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland
American Civil Liberties Union LGBT & AIDS Project
American Medical Student Association
American Social Health Association
Asian and Pacific Islander Wellness Center
Asian Human Services
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
Center for HIV Law and Policy
Center for Women Policy Studies
Chicago Recovery Alliance

Christie's Place
Coalition of HIV/AIDS Nonprofits and Governmental Entities (CHANGE Coalition)
Community Access National Network
Community HIV/Hepatitis Advocates of Iowa Network (CHAIN)
Different Avenues
Foundation for Studies and Research on Women (FEIM – Argentina)
Global Network of People Living with HIV, North America (GNP+NA)
Health Legal Services, a program of the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley
Healthcare Alternative Systems, Inc.
HIV Medicine Association
HIV/AIDS Law Project
ICW Global
Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health (ICAH)
International AIDS Women's Caucus
International Rectal Microbicide Advocates (IRMA)
International Women's Health Coalition
Just Detention International
Lambda Legal
Louisiana AIDS Advocacy Network (LAAN)
Minority AIDS Council of Orangeberg, Bamberg, and Calhoun Counties, Inc.
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD)
National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc.
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Health Law Program (NHeLP)
National Women's Health Network
New HIV Vaccine and Microbicide Advocacy Society
New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department
North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition (NCHRC)
Pediatric AIDS Chicago Prevention Initiative (PACPI)
Positive Support Organization
Primary Health Care, Inc.
Public Health Institute
Research Institute Without Walls (RIWW)
Rutgers WPF
Sero Project
Shanti Project
Sisterhood Mobilized for AIDS/HIV Research and Treatment (SMART)
SisterLove, Inc.
Sophia Forum
START at Westminster, Westminster Presbyterian Church
Treatment Access Expansion Project
Treatment Access Group (TAG)
U.S. Positive Women's Network – Philadelphia Regional Chapter
U.S. Positive Women's Network (PWN)
UAFC Joint Programme – Netherlands
United Church of Christ HIV and AIDS Network (UCAN Inc.)
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries
Women Organized to respond to Life-Threatening Diseases (WORLD)
Women Together for Change
The Women's Collective