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PRESIDENT TRUMP PROPOSES BOLD INITIATIVE TO END HIV IN THE UNITED STATES
The AIDS Institute Applauds Historic Action & Urges Congressional Support

Washington, DC – This evening, President Donald Trump announced a bold initiative to “End the HIV Epidemic” by 2030 in the United States as part of his State of the Union address.

“President Trump is taking a bold step to design an innovative program and strategy, and commit new resources, to end HIV in the United States. His proposal to increase access to antiretroviral medications for people living with HIV and for prevention in those communities with the highest rates of HIV and where additional resources are most needed will translate into fewer HIV infections. Under the President’s proposal, the number of new infections can eventually be reduced to zero,” commented Carl Schmid, Deputy Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. Schmid is also Co-Chair of the President’s Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA).

“While we might have policy differences with the President and his Administration, this initiative, if properly implemented and resourced, can go down in history as one of the most significant achievements of his Presidency,” stated The AIDS Institute’s Executive Director, Michael Ruppal. “We look forward
to learning more details of his plan, including its proposed budget, and will work together with the HIV community and state and local governments on its implementation. Before that can happen, though, Congress first must support its funding. Addressing HIV/AIDS at home and abroad has always been supported in a bipartisan manner, and we expect that to continue as this proposal is considered."

The first reported case of AIDS in the United States was in 1981. Since then, more than 700,000 people with AIDS have died in the U.S. Today, there are over 1.1 million people living with HIV and nearly 40,000 new diagnoses each year. While there is no cure, if people are adherent to a daily regimen of antiretroviral medications, they can live a relatively long and healthy life, and the virus can become suppressed to such a level that it cannot be transmitted. Therefore, treatment is also prevention. However, only half of all people living with HIV are virally suppressed.

There are other proven methods of HIV prevention, including condoms, syringe service programs, and now, an FDA approved drug that acts as a Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), that if taken daily prevents HIV. The initiative announced by President Trump includes a scale up of HIV testing, treatment and prevention, including PrEP, in the communities most impacted by HIV and in need of increased resources.

HIV has disproportionately impacted certain communities, including gay men, black women and men, and injection drug users. The highest new diagnoses today are occurring among young black and Latino gay men, followed by white gay men and black heterosexual women. Over half of all new diagnoses are in the South; 56 percent of new diagnoses are among people under 35; and 43 percent of new diagnoses are African Americans although they account for only 13 percent of the population.

HIV prevention in the U.S. is led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), AIDS research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and HIV treatment is financed by Medicaid, Medicare, private insurance and the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program at Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The Ryan White Program currently provides some level of health care, medications and support services to approximately one half of all people
diagnosed with HIV in the U.S. Its patient-focused system of care is credited with achieving an 86 percent viral suppression rate among its clients.

The initiative announced by the President builds upon these existing public health programs and was developed with the expertise of the heads of these agencies under the leadership of HHS Secretary Alex Azar and Assistant Secretary of Health Brett Giroir.

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The AIDS Institute is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that promotes action for social change through public policy, research, advocacy and education. For more information and to become involved, visit www.TheAIDSInstitute.org or write to us at Info@theaidsinstitute.org, and follow The AIDS Institute on Twitter @AIDSAAdvocacy and Facebook at www.facebook.com/The-AIDS-Institute.