



GAIA Toolkit for Action Against Proposed Cuts to AIDS Funding

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1. Ask your Congressperson to Maintain/Increase Funding for AIDS

Remember, it's the job of a Congressperson to satisfy the people s/he represents; if not, it could mean being voted out in the next election. But first, they must hear from you. Here are some tools to help you take a simple, impactful action with regard to the fiscal year 2018 budget and ending the AIDS epidemic:

- Link to find your Representative/Senator:

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>

<https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/>

- Phone script [you will either leave your message with an aide or leave a voicemail]:

I am calling today to urge you to maintain or even increase funding for AIDS programs in the fiscal year 2018 budget. We are at a historic time when ending AIDS is within reach, thanks to efforts making medications widely available in the developing world. The UNAIDS global strategy to end AIDS by 2030 requires not just maintaining current funding and treatment levels, but actually increasing the number of people on treatment. Therefore, these cuts would not just stall progress, they would actually spark a re-emergence of HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths around the world. I ask you to both vote against these cuts and speak out against them via social media, a public statement, or during a press interview. Thank you for your consideration. This is [say name, address including zip code, and telephone number].

[Note: Contact details are important to showing the Representative/Senator that you are, in fact, one of their constituents.]

- Letter/email template:

Dear Representative/Senator [insert name]:

I am writing today to urge you to maintain or even increase funding for AIDS programs (PEPFAR) in the fiscal year 2018 budget. Cutting funding for AIDS treatment in this moment would be tragic. We are at a historic time when ending AIDS is within reach, thanks largely to efforts making medications widely

available in the developing world. The UNAIDS global strategy to end AIDS by 2030 requires not just maintaining current funding and treatment levels, but actually increasing the number of people on treatment. This is critical given that about half of the population is under age 15 in much of the developing world and most new infections are occurring in youth ages 15-24. That means the deadliest epidemic in human history – nearly under control-- will come roaring back if medication supplies are under-funded. In other words, these cuts would not just stall progress, they would actually spark a massive re-emergence of HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths around the world. **I ask you to both vote against these cuts and speak out against them via social media, a public statement, or during a press interview.** Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

[Insert name, address including zip code, and telephone number]

[Note: contact details are important to showing the Representative/Senator that you are, in fact, one of their constituents.]

2. Share this graphic on social media.



**Ending AIDS is
Within Reach...**

but the U.S. administration is proposing budget cuts that could enable the deadliest epidemic in human history to come roaring back.

GAIA Global
AIDS
Interfaith
Alliance.
www.thegaia.org

Please share if you want
Congress to maintain or increase
funding for HIV/AIDS treatment.

3. Press Release Template:

Use the press release template below, customized with your logo (foundation, church, nonprofit, business) and other details in the highlighted blanks, distribute to your local news media, newsletter, blogs, email lists, or any other way you might think to distribute. Please contact Kristin Nash or Mark Conley-Buchsieb (415-461-7196) for ideas or support; and **please call to let us know if and how you distribute the press release.**



[INSERT PARTNER LOGO]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kristin Nash (415-755-5627) or
[INSERT PARTNER MEDIA CONTACT NAME, NUMBER]

INTERNATIONAL NGO, GAIA, AND [INSERT PARTNER NAME] CALL ADMINISTRATION CUTS TO PROGRAMS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH AIDS *TRAGIC* FOR THOSE AROUND THE WORLD WHO WILL DIE WITHOUT TREATMENT

--GAIA Toolkit Helps Constituents Ask Congress to Maintain or Increase Funding to End the AIDS Epidemic--

[INSERT RELEASE DATE], 2017 (San Rafael, CA and [INSERT PARTNER LOCATION]) -- Last week, the Trump administration released its fiscal year 2018 budget proposal, which includes a nearly 20 percent cut in funding for AIDS treatment programs, including the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), founded in 2003 by President George W. Bush, supported and expanded during the Obama administration, and widely credited with saving millions of lives during 15 years of steady global progress against HIV/AIDS. The budget, now headed to Congress, proposes to reduce U.S. spending on AIDS relief by about \$1.1 billion out of a \$6 billion budget. Much U.S. government funding for AIDS treatment comes through PEPFAR and, in 2016, PEPFAR-funded programs ensured that almost 12 million people (of the 18.2 million on treatment) had access to life-saving HIV treatment, nearly two million babies were born HIV-free to infected mothers, and more than six million orphans and vulnerable children received care and support. The Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR) estimates that the administration’s proposed cuts could cost more than a million lives and orphan more than 300,000 children.

“News that the current administration is proposing significant cuts to AIDS funding globally is tragic for the people around the world who will die, their families and communities, and for the incredible progress made toward breaking the epidemic,” says Todd Schafer, CEO of GAIA. “These cuts would not just stall progress, they would actually spark a massive increase in HIV incidence and continued death and devastation around the world.” As a secular, non-governmental organization working to end the

AIDS epidemic in Malawi, one of the poorest countries on the planet and an AIDS hotspot, the Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance (GAIA) is working to raise awareness of how the budget cuts would impact progress against the disease. [INSERT PARTNER NAME] works with GAIA [INSERT NATURE OF RELATIONSHIP AND WORK ON BEHALF OF HEALTH IN RURAL AFRICA].

“We stand at a historic time when ending AIDS is within reach, thanks largely to PEPFAR and efforts to make medications widely available in the developing world,” added Schafer. “The UNAIDS strategy to end AIDS requires not just maintaining current funding and treatment levels, but actually increasing the number of people on treatment.” In a briefing last week, the U.S. State Department reported that all people currently on treatment will be able to continue, but how that would be possible given the proposed cuts was unclear and how new and newly detected infections around the world would be treated was not addressed. “That means the deadliest epidemic in human history, increasingly under control, will come roaring back if funding for medications and prevention programs runs dry,” says, [INSERT NAME OF SPOKESPERSON, TITLE, ORGANIZATION].

The UNAIDS strategy to end AIDS by 2030 requires meeting the “90-90-90” HIV treatment targets. This means that 90 percent of people living with HIV must know their status, 90 percent of those must go onto treatment, and 90 percent of those must achieve viral suppression via careful adherence to the regimen. If these targets are met, according to UNAIDS, we can reach a tipping point in the epidemic.

“Prior to the time of antiretroviral therapy, we saw very productive professional people, our relatives and friends, losing weight slowly with no hope of treatment. Nobody wanted to shake hands with someone who was infected with HIV and AIDS, patients were isolated in a separate ward for fear of transmitting the infection and some infected individuals committed suicide, for they could not bear the stigma and discrimination,” says Joyce Jere, RN, MPH, GAIA’s Malawi Country Director. “Everyday the villages buried a loved one leaving so many children without parents. Most of these orphaned children were also infected with HIV, which made it too hard for the grandparents to take care of them. Today, these same children who were put on treatment whilst young have grown up and they need support to ensure that they live a quality life and this can only be achieved with adequate funding for continued education, prevention, treatment and care.”

Despite concerns about meeting 90-90-90 in remote, rural areas of Africa, in Malawi where GAIA works, progress is solid, at 73-89-91. “GAIA’s work confirms that achieving 90-90-90 is possible in even the most challenging settings, but the window of opportunity will not remain open indefinitely,” says Schafer. “The key is to achieve the tipping point before the wind shifts, which is why you’ve heard bipartisan calls for maintenance and expansion of PEPFAR funding in the Trump administration budget.” **People interested in voicing their opinion about budget priorities related to AIDS treatment programs and funding for PEPFAR, can visit www.thegaia.org for a toolkit and link to find your Congressperson (<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>).**

About GAIA

GAIA is a secular 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2000 in response to the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. Its mission is to develop and implement innovative and caring healthcare programs in resource-deprived regions in Africa, especially those most affected by HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. To ensure the broadest possible impact, we rigorously test initiatives and promote the replication of successful models. GAIA programs aim to achieve UNAIDS 90-90-90 HIV targets in rural, remote Malawi by 2020 -- 90% of people living with HIV know their status; 90% of those are on treatment; and 90% of those are

virally suppressed, or noninfectious -- a “treatment as prevention” strategy to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. For more information visit www.thegaia.org.

About [INSERT PARTNER NAME]

[INSERT BOILERPLATE COPY AND WEB ADDRESS]

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Background and resources:

1. GAIA 90-90-90 HIV Treatment Targets Graphic
https://www.dropbox.com/s/odo7rioz2qpw0yr/GAIA_Poster_042317.pdf?dl=0
2. A Historic Moment to End AIDS, How we Will Do it, and the Critical Role of PEPFAR Funding, Huffington Post, May 24, 2017
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/a-historic-moment-to-end-aids-how-we-will-do-it-and_us_5925e60fe4b090bac9d46b1a?ncid=engmodushpmsg00000003
3. Cuts to AIDS Treatment Programs Could Cost a Million Lives, New York Times, May 23, 2017
https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/23/world/africa/cuts-to-aids-treatment-programs-could-cost-a-million-lives.html?ref=politics&utm_source=huffingtonpost.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=pubexchange_article&r=0
4. On-the-Record-Briefing: The President's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Request for the U.S. Department of State and USAID
<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/05/271058.htm>
5. Bill Frist: The Case for Keeping America’s AIDS Relief Plan, New York Times, Feb. 9, 2017
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/09/opinion/bill-frist-the-case-for-keeping-americas-aids-relief-plan.html?r=0>