



AIDSWatch

2024 Talking Points

AIDSWatch – hosted by AIDS United, in partnership with the U.S. People Living with HIV Caucus and the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation – is the largest constituent-led HIV advocacy event in the country. For 31 years, those of us living with and vulnerable to HIV and our allies have advocated on the state, local and national level for policies that will help end the HIV epidemic. Amid Congress' increased efforts to direct federal resources to the most impactful programs, this advocacy is more important than ever!

In order to ensure that we are able to bring about an end to the HIV epidemic by 2030, AIDSWatch advocates offer the following policy priorities:

Support Programs & Institutions Dedicated to PLWH in FY 2025 Appropriations

We ask that Congress fund the following programs at these levels in fiscal year 2025:

- **Enhance the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program** for the communities most impacted by HIV, at \$3.058 billion, and **provide robust funding for access to essential services** (transportation, food and nutrition, linguistic services, case management, housing services, etc.) for program recipients.
- **Include report language in the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program that meaningfully addresses the unmet needs of older adults living with HIV** and urges the HIV/AIDS Bureau to significantly increase support for programs/models of care that comprehensively service older adults living with HIV.
- **Fund and scale up PrEP, PEP, and treatment-as-prevention** services and messaging for priority HIV populations, particularly through supporting Community Health Centers.
- **Support funding for new and innovative programs to expand PrEP access**, and ensure that those who want PrEP can easily access the medication without any costs or barriers.
- **Support housing as an essential aspect of healthcare by funding HOPWA**, the Housing Opportunities for People living With HIV/AIDS program, at \$600 million. While this request does not reflect the community's true need, it would begin a vital investment in support of people living with HIV and towards ending the epidemic.
- **Train the health care workforce our country needs to address HIV** and other public health issues by increasing funding for the AIDS Education and Training Centers (AETCs) to \$58 million to support the development of innovative models of HIV care and treatment.
- **Provide much needed support for the intersecting HIV, viral hepatitis, and overdose syndemics that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic** by allocating \$150 million for the Opioid Related Infectious Diseases line at the CDC.
- **Remove barriers to federal funding for harm reduction programs** that are vital to ending the HIV and overdose epidemics.
- **Support the Minority AIDS Initiative and supplemental Ending the Epidemic funding** to advance grassroots Black-led community based organizations, expand access to high quality HIV services, and to reduce disparities in health outcomes among racial and ethnic minorities.
- Continue to **support the Indian Health Service** to meet the health needs of Indigenous people living with and impacted by HIV.
- Oppose efforts to undercut **Medicaid** and support efforts to **close the Medicaid coverage gap**.



Support Evidence-Based Interventions to End the HIV Epidemic

Ending the HIV epidemic requires the implementation of innovative strategies that support evidence-based interventions. To ensure that we are doing everything in our power to prevent the spread of HIV, lawmakers must support policies that remove barriers to treatment and increase access to vital services.

- Integrate **innovations to telemedicine** into federal efforts to end the HIV epidemic.
- Support legislation that **expands broadband access** to underserved and rural areas.
- Continue the work, with HIV community input, on the uses of **HIV molecular surveillance** and the effect it has on the criminalization and stigmatization of people living with HIV.

Support Legislative Asks that Center the Voices of People Impacted by HIV

During the 118th Congress session, we recommend that the following bills are reintroduced and/or passed:

- Pass the **Freedom to Vote Act (H.R. 11/S.1)** which includes measures to reform voter registration, integrity, and voting access and the **John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 14)**, which would strengthen the government's ability to respond to voting discrimination.
- Support non-discrimination protections for people living with and vulnerable to HIV and/or LGBTQ+ people, such as the **Equality Act (H.R. 15/S.5)** and the **REPEAL HIV Discrimination Act**.
- Support the **Chyna Gibson Stop the Transgender Murder Epidemic Act (H.R.4960)**, to create a Commission that addresses the pervasive, and targeted epidemic of violence and discrimination disproportionately impacting the transgender community.
- Pass the **Medicare For All Act (H.R. 3421)** to establish a national health insurance program.
- Reauthorize the **Older Americans Act (H.R. 4120/S. 1979)** and include language that designates older adults living with HIV and LGBTQ+ older people as populations of "greatest social need."
- Introduce a *national Long-Term Care Bill of Rights*, protecting people from discrimination in long-term care settings on the basis of HIV status, sexual orientation, and gender identity.
- Bolster efforts that increase access to HIV pre-and post-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP and PEP), such as the **PrEP Access and Coverage Act (H.R. 4392/S. 2188)**.
- Support legislation that addresses health injustices through a racial justice lens, like the **Anti-Racism in Public Health Act (H.R.2904/S.1317)**.
- Support the bipartisan **HELP Copays Act (H.R. 830, S.1375)** to protect patients from harmful insurance and pharmacy benefit manager practices that raise patient out-of-pocket drug costs.
- Endorse efforts to expand health care access and coverage for disenfranchised populations, such as the **Reentry Act (H.R.2400/S.1165)** and the **Due Process Continuity of Care Act (H.R.3074/S.971)**.
- Oppose the **Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl (HALT) Act (H.R. 467/S.1141)**, which would revive failed, punitive drug policies by issuing new mandatory minimums for all fentanyl-related substances while hampering our ability to do research.
- Support legislation that expands reproductive rights and comprehensive sexual health education, such as the **Real Education and Access for Healthy Youth Act (REAHYA) (H.R.3583/S.1697)**.
- Oppose legislation that threatens internet privacy and further criminalizes and stigmatizes sex workers, including the **EARN IT Act**.
- Pass the **LGBTQI+ Data Inclusion Act (H.R.3970/S.1839)** to ensure lawmakers and federal agencies have the comprehensive data they need to address LGBTQ+ issues.
- Support the **Health Equity and Access under Law (HEAL) for Immigrant Families Act (H.R. 5008/S.2646)**, which removes cruel and unnecessary barriers to health care for immigrants of all statuses.