The AIDS Institute Calls for a Collective Commitment and Accountability to End HIV/AIDS on World AIDS Day

Praises President Obama for New Domestic AIDS Funding

Washington, DC – The AIDS Institute recognizes and observes this year’s World AIDS Day theme as one of the most challenging and most promising at the same time: “Getting to Zero: Zero New HIV Infections, Zero Discrimination, Zero AIDS-Related Deaths.” “This year has proven that HIV treatment not only saves lives, but also reduces new infections,” said Michael Ruppal, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. “The scale-up of treatment programs and research nationally and internationally is necessary to realize this zero goal,” he continued, “but funding and policy debates are threatening the kind of progress we all want to see."

An estimated 1.2 million people in the U.S. are living with HIV while there are 33 million globally. In the U.S. there are about 50,000 new HIV infections each year. Reducing this number to zero and providing treatment to all will take a collective commitment and accountability at all levels of our communities, healthcare system, and governments.

The economy in the U.S. has severely impacted the fight against HIV and forced many organizations that provided life saving care and support services to close. We must commit to ensuring that appropriate resources are in place to continue the fight and not allow retreat as an option. There are generations of people counting on the actions we take today.

This year brought us exciting news about the potential for pre-exposure prophylaxis and microbicides to prevent HIV transmission, along with improvements in antiretroviral therapies. This is tempered by funding cutbacks and a continuation of lack of access to medications both in the U.S. and in the developing world. “We are still years away from a vaccine and a cure,” said Ruppal, “but there needs to be the political will to dedicate the necessary resources for discovery to occur.”

Today, President Obama recommitted the United States’ leadership to the global AIDS fight and announced an additional $50 million to provide care and treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS in the U.S. “With nearly 6,600 people in 12 states on AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAP) wait lists the $35 million in new federal funding will help provide
medications to about 3,300 people," said Carl Schmid, Deputy Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. "While this is a very positive step by the President, we call on the US Congress to act as well by providing the necessary funding not only for ADAP, but for HIV care and prevention programs."

Marylin Merida, Board President of The AIDS Institute noted, "This is the first time in our 30 year fight against HIV/AIDS that we can actually see an end to this devastating disease. We must harness our collective power to continue to fight for already stretched resources and save lives."

The AIDS Institute, on this World AIDS Day, calls upon people living with HIV, advocates, leaders and our communities to take action and envision a world without HIV and work toward a world with Zero new HIV infections, Zero discrimination and Zero AIDS-related deaths.

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For more information and to become involved, please contact The AIDS Institute at: (202) 835-8373, or by email at: Info@theaidsinstitute.org or www.TheAIDSInstitute.org

The AIDS Institute is a national nonprofit agency that promotes action for social change through public policy research, advocacy and education.