

Letter From the President

07/13/2010

Thirty years ago, the first cases of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) garnered the world's attention. Since then, over 575,000 Americans have lost their lives to AIDS and more than 56,000 people in the United States become infected with HIV each year. Currently, there are more than 1.1 million Americans living with HIV. Moreover, almost half of all Americans know someone living with HIV.

Our country is at a crossroads. Right now, we are experiencing a domestic epidemic that demands a renewed commitment, increased public attention, and leadership. Early in my Administration, I tasked the Office of National AIDS Policy with developing a National HIV/AIDS Strategy with three primary goals: 1) reducing the number of people who become infected with HIV; 2) increasing access to care and improving health outcomes for people living with HIV; and, 3) reducing HIV-related health disparities. To accomplish these goals, we must undertake a more coordinated national response to the epidemic. The Federal government can't do this alone, nor should it. Success will require the commitment of governments at all levels, businesses, faith communities, philanthropy, the scientific and medical communities, educational institutions, people living with HIV, and others.

Countless Americans have devoted their lives to fighting the HIV epidemic and thanks to their tireless work we've made real inroads. People living with HIV have transformed how we engage community members in setting policy, conducting research, and providing services. Researchers have produced a wealth of information about the disease, including a number of critical tools and interventions to diagnose, prevent, and treat HIV. Successful prevention efforts have averted more than 350,000 new infections in the United States. And health care and other services providers have taught us how to provide quality services in diverse settings and develop medical homes for people with HIV. This moment represents an opportunity for the Nation. Now is the time to build on and refocus our existing efforts to deliver better results for the American people.

I look forward to working with Congress, State, tribal, and local governments, and other stakeholders to support the implementation of a Strategy that is innovative, grounded in the best science, focuses on the areas of greatest need, and that provides a clear direction for moving forward together.

Barack Obama
The White House