

Overview of Domestic HIV/AIDS Activities Across Federal Departments

The [National HIV/AIDS Strategy](#) (NHAS) calls upon Federal Departments and Agencies to think differently about their efforts to address the HIV epidemic, including working to better coordinate efforts within and across their organizations. The President designated six “lead agencies” with primary responsibility for implementing the Strategy:

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Labor
- Department of Justice
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Social Security Administration.

Each has developed and presented to the White House an Operational Plan detailing their approaches to implementing the Strategy. These agencies are also represented on the Federal Interagency Working Group that advised on the development of the Strategy and which continues to convene and foster coordination of and collaboration on HIV prevention, care and treatment, and research efforts across the government. Each of these Departments addresses unique and important aspects of Nation’s efforts to realize the vision of the NHAS:

The United States will become a place where new HIV infections are rare and when they do occur, every person, regardless of age, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or socio-economic circumstance, will have unfettered access to high quality, life-extending care, free from stigma and discrimination.

The White House’s [Office of National AIDS Policy](#) (ONAP) led the development of the NHAS. ONAP serves as the lead entity for setting the Administration’s HIV/AIDS policies and oversees government-wide efforts to improve the Nation’s response to the HIV epidemic. This role includes working with the lead agencies to support and monitor the implementation of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy. The following highlights the range of HIV-related activities across those Departments.



Department of Labor

The [Department of Labor](#) (DOL) fosters, promotes, and develops the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the United States; improves working conditions; advances opportunities

for profitable employment; and assures work-related benefits and rights. While DOL has no specific domestic HIV/AIDS programs, it addresses activities important to achieving the Strategy’s goals and completing several of the activities identified in the [NHAS Federal Implementation Plan](#).

As part of coordinated Federal efforts to strengthen the current HIV/AIDS care provider workforce and improve the quality of care and health outcomes for people living with HIV, DOL and HHS will work with health professions associations and collaborate on workforce training efforts to increase the number of health providers who are culturally competent. DOL will also collaborate with other Federal Departments to develop standardized occupational guidelines for outreach workers, health educators, hotline operators, peer counselors, and testing/counseling personnel.

As part of efforts by multiple Federal Departments to help individuals living with HIV access income supports, including job skills and employment, DOL’s [Employment and Training Administration](#) and [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#) will consider ways to increase supports for employers to hire and maintain employment of people with HIV and how to integrate them in broader employment initiatives for people with disabilities.

Finally, DOL will also participate in a government-wide effort to enforce antidiscrimination laws applicable to people living with HIV or AIDS. DOL’s [Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs](#) enforces Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which requires that that contractors doing business with the Federal government do not discriminate against people with disabilities.

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Mr. Dylan Orr, Special Assistant, Office of Disability Employment Policy



Department of Justice

The [Department of Justice](#) (DOJ) is responsible for enforcing Federal laws and administering justice in the United States. The DOJ’s NHAS responsibilities fall primarily into two main areas: addressing

HIV/AIDS in Federal prisons and combating discrimination against people living with HIV or AIDS. Through the [Bureau of Prisons](#) DOJ operates the largest

correctional facility system in the U.S. with approximately 210,000 inmates and 115 institutions. Among those inmates are approximately 1,500 individuals being treated for HIV or AIDS. DOJ's NHAS Operational Plan will address HIV screening and care and treatment of inmates diagnosed with HIV as well as support linkages to care upon their release to the community.

DOJ is leading the Federal government's efforts to strengthen enforcement of civil rights laws as called for in the Strategy. DOJ works to eradicate discrimination against people with disabilities, including those with HIV/AIDS, by implementing the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA). DOJ is enhancing cooperation with other Federal agencies, including HHS, HUD, DOL, and EEOC to facilitate enforcement of Federal anti-discrimination laws.

Finally, the Strategy also calls for State legislatures to consider reviewing HIV-specific criminal statutes to ensure that they are consistent with current knowledge of HIV transmission and support public health approaches to screening for, preventing and treating HIV. To support these efforts, DOJ is providing technical assistance to States considering changes to HIV criminal statutes in order to align laws and policies with public health principles.

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Ms. Allison Nichols, Deputy Chief, Disability Rights Section, Civil Rights Division



Department of Veterans Affairs

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) (VA) is the largest single provider of medical care to people with HIV in the United States supporting over 24,000 Veterans living with HIV, over half of whom are over the age

of 50. This includes HIV testing, care, and treatment, clinician and patient education, prevention activities, and research directed at continuous improvement of medical and preventive services and delivery of care to veterans. The [Department's HIV/AIDS efforts](#) are carried out by VA medical facilities across the country.

In support of the Strategy, VA will collaborate with other Departments to develop plans that support health care providers and other staff who deliver HIV test results to conduct linkages to high quality care and ensure that providers are knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS treatment guidelines. VA will also collaborate with other Departments to develop educational and training materials to improve mental health and substance use assessments and treatments

among those who are HIV positive. In addition, VA will participate in developing strategies to encourage providers to collect and report standardized viral load and CD4 data from infected individuals.



Department of Housing and Urban Development

The [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) (HUD)

administers a number of federal housing programs that work to prevent and end homelessness,

assist persons with disabilities and address housing challenges of low-income households. HUD's [Office of HIV/AIDS Housing](#) manages the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program. The Office also works with other HUD offices to ensure that all HUD programs and initiatives are responsive to the special needs of people with HIV/AIDS. HOPWA promotes stable housing as a platform for delivering a wide variety of health and social services for many of the nation's most vulnerable households. HOPWA funds may be used for a wide range of housing, social services, program planning, and development costs. These include rental assistance and short-term payments to prevent homelessness, as well as the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of housing units, and costs for facility operations. HOPWA funds also may be used to support access to health care and mental health services, chemical dependency treatment, nutritional services, case management, assistance with daily living, and other supportive services.

Ninety percent of HOPWA funds are distributed by formula to cities and States based on the number of AIDS cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. HUD's formula grants are managed by 124 local and State jurisdictions, which coordinate AIDS housing efforts with other HUD and community resources. HUD made available a record \$335 million in HOPWA funds in FY2010 to help communities provide housing for this special needs population. Overall, these resources assist 60,669 households annually to promote stable housing and reduced risks of homelessness for those living with HIV and other challenges.

Under the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, HUD will lead a process with relevant Federal agencies to identify ways to collaborate and increase access to nonmedical supportive services (e.g., housing, food/nutrition services, transportation) as critical elements of an effective HIV care system. In addition, HUD and other relevant Federal agencies will develop joint strategies to encourage co-location of and enhance the availability

of HIV-related services at housing and other nontraditional HIV care sites.

Contact: *Mr. David Vos*, Director, Office of HIV/AIDS Housing



Social Security Administration

People with HIV/AIDS who cannot work may qualify for disability benefits from the [Social Security Administration](#) (SSA). Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is designed to

provide financial support for people with disabilities and extremely low incomes. The Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program provides benefits for people with disabilities who meet insured status by accruing a specified number of work credits through their payroll tax contributions. People living with HIV/AIDS can begin the Social Security application process immediately after quitting work or significantly limiting their work hours because they are no longer able to perform gainful work.

Under the Strategy, SSA will be working with other Departments to help individuals living with HIV access income supports, including job skills and employment. SSA is also updating the HIV infection entry in the Listing of Impairments, the screening tool used by SSA to identify claimants who are so severely impaired that they are unable to do any gainful work, regardless of their age, education, or work experience, and thus qualify for disability benefits.

Contact: *Mr. David Rust*, Deputy Commissioner for Retirement and Disability Policy



Department of Health and Human Services

The [Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) is the United States government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential

human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. HHS administers a wide array of programs spanning HIV/AIDS education, prevention, testing, care and treatment, and research.

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Dr. Ronald Valdiserri, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health, Infectious Diseases

Agencies and offices from across HHS have key responsibilities for implementing specific activities in support of the NHAS goals:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – The mission of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) is to collaborate to create the expertise, information, and tools that people and communities need to protect their health – through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury and disability, and preparedness for new health threats. CDC is the [lead agency for the nation's efforts to prevent HIV](#) with responsibilities for public health surveillance, prevention research, and programs to prevent and control HIV.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services – The [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) (CMS) ensures effective, up-to-date health care coverage and promotes quality care for beneficiaries. CMS supports HIV/AIDS care for low income or disabled beneficiaries.

Food and Drug Administration – The [Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) is responsible for protecting the public health by assuring the safety, effectiveness, and security of human and veterinary drugs, vaccines and other biological products, medical devices, our nation's food supply, cosmetics, dietary supplements, and products that give off radiation; regulating tobacco products; advancing the public health by helping to speed product innovations; and helping the public get the accurate, science-based information they need to use medicines and foods to improve their health. [FDA's HIV/AIDS activities](#) include ensuring the safety of the nation's blood supply and regulating HIV medicines, HIV testing, and barrier devices such as condoms.

Health Resources and Services Administration – The [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) (HRSA) is the primary Federal agency for improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated or medically vulnerable. HRSA's [HIV/AIDS Bureau](#) administers the Ryan White Care Act, the largest Federal program focused exclusively on HIV/AIDS care. The program is for those who do not have sufficient health care coverage or financial resources for coping with HIV disease. HRSA also funds [Health Centers](#) in communities, providing access to high quality, family oriented, comprehensive primary and preventive health care for people who are low income, uninsured, or living where health care is scarce. In addition, HRSA supports programs that increase access to health care by developing, distributing and retaining a diverse, culturally competent health [workforce](#).

Indian Health Service – The [Indian Health Service](#) (IHS), an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, is responsible for providing Federal health services to American Indians and Alaska Natives. The IHS provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 1.9 million American

Indians and Alaska Natives who belong to 564 Federally recognized tribes in 35 states. The IHS [HIV/AIDS Program](#) is cultivated from a myriad of services, projects, facilities, funding sources and field expertise. The program encompasses the major service-delivery systems accessed by the American Indian/Alaska Native community, including IHS, tribal, and urban facilities.

National Institutes of Health – The mission of the [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH) is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce the burdens of illness and disability. It is the leading U.S. government organization for [HIV/AIDS research](#), with activities underway in nearly all 27 institutes and offices. The NIH represents the largest and most significant public investment in AIDS research in the world. The research takes place in laboratories and clinics on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland, and through a vast network of supported research at universities, medical centers and clinical trial sites around the globe.

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health – The [Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health](#) (OASH) is comprised of 12 core public health offices and the [Commissioned Corps](#), a uniformed service of more than 6,500 health professionals who serve at HHS and other Federal agencies. OASH is playing a lead role in supporting the implementation of the Strategy by forging collaborations across HHS and with other Federal Departments and coordinating Federal efforts with States. Within the OASH key offices with HIV/AIDS portfolios include the [Office of HIV/AIDS Policy](#), [Office on Women’s Health](#), [Office of Minority Health](#), [Office of Adolescent Health](#), [Regional Health Administrators](#), [Office of Population Affairs](#), [Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion](#), and the Secretariat for the [Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS](#) (PACHA).

Office for Civil Rights – The [Office for Civil Rights](#) (OCR) helps to protect Americans from discrimination in certain healthcare and social service programs. OCR also helps to protect the privacy of American’s health information held by health insurers and certain health care providers and health insurers.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – The mission of the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (SAMHSA) is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America’s communities. SAMHSA’s HIV/AIDS activities address mental health and substance use issues that can put individuals at greater risk for HIV

infection or which co-occur with HIV infection and can hinder access to treatment and maintenance in care. Their programs also support substance abuse treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS which reduces their transmission risk.

Other Federal Activities

In addition to the efforts of these lead agencies, other Federal Departments and Agencies are supporting the implementation of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy.



Department of Defense

The Secretary of Defense has submitted to the White House Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) a plan for aligning the health care services provided by the [Department of Defense](#) (DOD) with the Strategy, to the extent feasible and permitted by law. The plan addresses, in particular, HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment.



Department of State

The Secretary of [State](#) has provided ONAP and OMB recommendations for improving the government-wide response to the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic based on lessons learned in implementing the [President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief](#) (PEPFAR). PEPFAR is the U.S. Government initiative to help save the lives of those suffering from HIV/AIDS around the world.



Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

The Chair of the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) (EEOC) has prepared for ONAP and OMB recommendations for increasing employment opportunities for people living with HIV and a plan for addressing employment-related discrimination against people living with HIV, consistent with the Commission’s authorities and other applicable law.

Finally, the **Centers for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships** from DOJ, DOL, HUD, HHS, and VA, joined by the Department of Education and the White House’s [Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships](#), are also engaged in a cross-departmental effort to engage more faith leaders in promoting nonjudgmental support for people living with HIV and other HIV prevention, care and treatment activities contributing to the realization of the Strategy’s goals.