



United States President's Emergency  
Plan for AIDS Relief

*Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator*

*Washington, D.C. 20522-2920*

May 12, 2009

Mr. Cary Alan Johnson  
Executive Director  
International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission  
90 Maiden Lane, Suite 1505  
New York, NY 10038

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Thank you for your letter to Secretary Clinton highlighting the importance of ensuring access for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals to activities supported by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). As you know, the President and Secretary Clinton have announced the selection of Dr. Eric Goosby, a world-renowned expert and leader in the fight against AIDS, to serve as the Global AIDS Coordinator within the Department of State, leading a unified U.S. Government response. As the first order of business, Secretary Clinton will direct Dr. Goosby, if confirmed, to undertake a comprehensive strategic review of PEPFAR funding and programs. This effort will inform development of the Congressionally-mandated strategy for the next phase of PEPFAR. Dr. Goosby and the interagency PEPFAR team will redouble the focus on prevention and explore options to bolster PEPFAR's prevention programming. In the meantime, I would like to describe some of PEPFAR's current work that relates to your concerns.

By law, PEPFAR is required to provide "balanced funding for prevention activities for sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS," and to fund activities "in a meaningful and equitable way... based on objective epidemiological evidence as to the source of infections and in consultation with the government of each host country involved in HIV/AIDS prevention activities." PEPFAR is thus committed to implementing comprehensive, evidence-based strategies that address each host country's epidemic, whether that epidemic is primarily generalized throughout the population or primarily concentrated within population sub-groups. PEPFAR supports a comprehensive, evidence-based prevention portfolio for sexual transmission that promotes the "ABC" behaviors (Abstinence, Be faithful, correct and consistent Condom use), as well as supporting prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission, transmission through unsafe blood and medical injections, male medical circumcision, and HIV counseling and testing. PEPFAR supports all three components of the ABC approach as part of its comprehensive, evidence-based approach to HIV prevention, with a country-driven response that actively works to tailor programs to address each country's epidemic.

In terms of host country policy reform, PEPFAR country teams are currently developing multi-year, strategic Partnership Frameworks with a number of countries, with the goal of strengthening country capacity, ownership and leadership. Discussions on the Frameworks provide an opportunity for PEPFAR teams to highlight national policies that could promote

effective HIV/AIDS programs, including legal reforms to address stigma and discrimination, promote gender equity, and reduce sexual violence.

Many PEPFAR country programs have focused on the important nexus between HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence. Programs support HIV post-exposure prophylaxis in clinical settings for survivors of violence; links with police and judicial support, counseling and support services; health workers' awareness of and skills to address violence; and links with community and social services that provide protection and care for victims of violence.

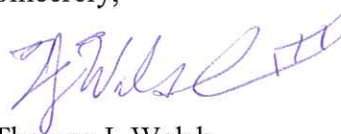
PEPFAR is committed to supporting activities that address the HIV/AIDS needs of LGBT populations. For example, in Vietnam, PEPFAR supports a prevention program for men who have sex with men (MSM), while also building the capacity of community-based organizations. Services include peer education and outreach, counseling and testing, provision of condoms and lubricant, establishment of drop-in centers, training of outreach workers and health providers, and community advocacy. In Thailand, PEPFAR supports programs to serve the needs of MSM and transgender populations. Individuals who were exposed to a targeted prevention media campaign reinforcing behavioral interventions for MSMs were shown to be more likely to seek testing for HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

PEPFAR also supports studies to help countries determine the scope and impact of the epidemic among particular at-risk populations. By working with PEPFAR-supported epidemiologists, country programs can conduct research needed to track and address increases in transmission rates among particular populations, identify venues and interventions for reaching groups in need of services, and develop user-friendly, appropriately tailored services for the local context. In Kenya, PEPFAR-funded studies helped to identify and accurately document prevalence rates among MSM, which resulted in recommendations that the National AIDS Control Council expand their programming for this population in 2009.

Your letter raises important points regarding condom distribution, many of which PEPFAR is addressing in our field programming. Substantial evidence speaks to the effectiveness of a core set of interventions for populations at increased risk for HIV, including peer education and outreach, HIV counseling and testing, and condom and lubricant promotion and distribution. From 2004 to 2008, U.S. Government global health programs supplied more than 2.2 billion condoms worldwide. According to UNAIDS, this total is more than all other developed countries combined.

Thank you for your commitment to the fight against global HIV/AIDS. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Walsh", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas J. Walsh  
Deputy Coordinator (Acting) and  
Chief of Staff