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November 17, 2016

President-elect Donald J. Trump  
Transition Team Office  
Washington, DC

Dear President-elect Trump:

As you prepare to assume the Presidency of the United States of America, the HIV Medicine Association would like to offer our expertise to serve as a resource to you and your health policy team on domestic and global HIV issues.

HIVMA is an organization of more than 5,000 medical care providers and researchers who have been on the front lines of the HIV epidemic since it began in the early 1980s. We are part of the Infectious Diseases Society of America, the professional society of physicians and researchers interested in Infectious Diseases. Our mission is to promote quality in HIV care by advocating policies and supporting programs that ensure a science-based response to the HIV pandemic.

### National HIV/AIDS Strategy and Access to Affordable Health Care

Our key priorities in the U.S. are focused on supporting full implementation of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, which provides a roadmap and vision toward ending the HIV epidemic in the U.S. by reducing infections, increasing access to care, improving health outcomes for people living with HIV, and addressing HIV-related disparities and health inequities. While people with HIV are now living longer due to improved access to care and potent therapies, nearly 50,000 persons are diagnosed with HIV annually in the US, and the number of people needing HIV care continues to increase every year. Since August 1990 when Congress enacted and President Ronald Reagan signed the Ryan White Care Act into law, this program has been critical in providing comprehensive care to those living with HIV. Currently, nearly 75 percent of patients with HIV in the U.S. receive care at Ryan White-funded clinics. We strongly recommend that your administration continue to support and expand this program that has enjoyed overwhelming bipartisan support since its inception. Likewise, the healthcare coverage and protections provided by the Affordable Care Act offered many of our patients health insurance for the first time and have played a central role in advancing the goals of the NHAS.

We look forward to working with you and your administration on sustaining and expanding access to affordable health insurance, including affordable prescription drugs, for people living with HIV and protecting them from any disruptions in health care coverage.

### **HIV/ID Workforce Issues**

In addition, as the number of American patients requiring HIV care continues to increase, we are facing a serious shortage of trained HIV and infectious disease care providers over the next five years. Building the HIV workforce is a pressing issue that needs to be addressed. We hope your administration will support programs and incentives to encourage medical providers to enter the fields of HIV and infectious diseases care.

### **HIV Research**

We also strongly urge you to increase our investment in HIV/AIDS research, which has been flat-funded for many years, so that we can take advantage of today's unprecedented scientific advances to make critical breakthroughs that can have major impacts on ending the HIV epidemic, including a vaccine and a cure. Of note, investment in HIV/AIDS research also has greatly contributed to advancing science and providing infrastructure to fight other communicable diseases such as Ebola and Zika domestically and globally.

### **Global AIDS Programs as a National Security Priority**

We have made substantial gains in the global HIV epidemic as a result of our nation's leadership through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Fund. PEPFAR was created in 2003 by President George W. Bush with strong bi-partisan Congressional support. It has become the most impactful global health program ever enacted and is now responsible for providing HIV treatment to over 9.5 million people, including treatment for millions of pregnant women to prevent babies from being born with HIV. The Global Fund is a multi-sectoral partnership that funds local programs in countries and communities most in need to accelerate the end of the HIV, tuberculosis and malaria epidemics. Global Fund-supported programs have saved 20 million lives. We stand at a tipping point at which we must reinforce our commitments or see our progress eroded with devastating consequences and an expanding pandemic. It is essential to strengthen our nation's commitment to ending the global AIDS pandemic by ensuring a \$2 billion increase in annual funding for PEPFAR by 2020 to double the number of people on treatment and to ensure robust community engagement in the scale-up of treatment and evidence-based prevention programs. Strengthening global health and ensuring continuity of leadership to guide these efforts must be an important national security priority.

### **Infectious Disease Outbreaks and the Opioid Epidemic**

Finally, we are deeply concerned about the growing opioid epidemic in the U.S. and the potential for many more HIV and hepatitis C outbreaks similar to what occurred in Scott County, Indiana in 2015. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 220 counties in 26 states are vulnerable to spikes in HIV and hepatitis C infections due to injection drug use.

We urge strong support for proven interventions that are highly effective at halting the spread of these infections in individuals who inject drugs, such as syringe access programs, in addition to increased resources for substance use prevention and treatment services to address this serious public health crisis.

We hope you will call on us as you convene your health policy team, and specifically as you develop your HIV policy agenda, so that we can offer greater detail on these issues and others that affect our patients. We hope to work with you, your Administration and Congress to achieve an AIDS-free generation. We can be reached through the HIVMA executive director Andrea Weddle at [aweddle@hivma.org](mailto:aweddle@hivma.org) or (703) 299-0915.

Closing,



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