

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

Statement on the Global Health Initiative

May 5, 2009

In the 21st century, disease flows freely across borders and oceans, and in recent days, the 2009 H1N1 virus has reminded us of the urgent need for action. We cannot wall ourselves off from the world and hope for the best, nor ignore the public health challenges beyond our borders. An outbreak in Indonesia can reach Indiana within days, and public health crises abroad can cause widespread suffering, conflict, and economic contraction. That is why I am asking Congress to approve my fiscal year 2010 budget request of \$8.6 billion—and \$63 billion over 6 years—to shape a new, comprehensive global health strategy. We cannot simply confront individual preventable illnesses in isolation. The world is interconnected, and that demands an integrated approach to global health.

As a U.S. Senator, I joined a bipartisan majority in supporting the Bush administration's effective President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). That plan has provided lifesaving medicines and prevention efforts to millions of people living in some of the world's most extreme conditions. Last summer, the Congress approved the Lantos-Hyde U.S. Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS Act, legislation that I was proud to cosponsor as a U.S. Senator and now carry out as President. But I also recognize that we will not be successful in our efforts to end deaths from AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis unless we do more to improve health systems around the world, focus our efforts on child and maternal health, and ensure that best practices drive the funding for these programs.

My budget makes critical investments in a new, comprehensive global health strategy. We support the promise of PEPFAR while increasing and enhancing our efforts to combat diseases that claim the lives of 26,000 children each day. We cannot fix every problem. But we have a responsibility to protect the health of our people, while saving lives, reducing suffering, and supporting the health and dignity of people everywhere. America can make a significant difference in meeting these challenges, and that is why my administration is committed to act.

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