

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2016*

**Statement on the 35th Anniversary of HIV/AIDS in the United States**

*June 5, 2016*

On June 5, 1981, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a report on what would later be understood as the first documented cases of AIDS. The past 35 years tell a story that bends from uncertainty, fear, and loss toward resilience, innovation, and hope.

We've learned that stigma and silence don't just fuel ignorance, they foster transmission and give life to a plague. We've seen that testing, treatment, education, and acceptance can not only save and extend lives, but fight the discrimination that halted progress for too long. And we've reaffirmed that most American of ideas: that ordinary citizens can speak out, band ourselves together like a breathtaking quilt, and change the course of our communities and our Nation for the better.

Over these 35 years, American ingenuity and leadership has shaped the world's response to this crisis. From the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program to the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), we've saved millions of lives at home and around the world. My administration implemented our Nation's first comprehensive national HIV/AIDS strategy, and we've updated it through 2020.

We've invested in research and evidence-based practices that have given us revolutionary tools like treatment as prevention and preexposure prophylaxis. We've made critical investments to help eliminate waiting lists for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program. We've continued efforts to support the promise of a vaccine. And the Affordable Care Act has resulted in millions of individuals gaining affordable, high-quality health coverage, all without denial for preexisting conditions like HIV.

While there is more work to do—the economically disadvantaged; gay and bisexual men, especially those who are young and Black; women of color; and transgender women all continue to face huge disparities—I'm confident that if we build upon the steps we've taken, we can finish the job.

Nearly 5 years ago, I said that an AIDS-free generation is within reach, and today, the global community is committed to ending this epidemic by 2030. This will take American leadership, smart investments, and a commitment to ensure that all communities are heard and included as we move forward.

So today let's call the names. Let's remember those we lost too soon. And let's rededicate ourselves to ending this epidemic once and for all.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : HIV/AIDS in the U.S., 35th anniversary.

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