

World AIDS Day Petition-Protect the Lives of Young People!

Dear President Obama,

On this World AIDS Day, we - the undersigned organizations and individuals who are deeply committed to addressing the urgent prevention needs of young women and men - reflect on the progress of the U.S. response to the global HIV/AIDS epidemic and the challenges which still lie before us. As the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief moves into its next phase, it must adequately address the prevention needs of young people. Young people comprise approximately 45 percent of new infections, with most infections transmitted through sexual contact. Young women are acutely affected, particularly in places like sub-Saharan Africa where three quarters of young people living with HIV are women. Looking forward, PEPFAR's policies and programs must support and provide young people with the full range of comprehensive information and services necessary to make sound and healthy decisions, including correct and consistent use of male and female condoms. We urge you to work with the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) to:

1. Fund Evidence-Based, Comprehensive Prevention for Adolescents and Youth

- It is important to ensure that all young people, including those who are sexually active and those who will become sexually active in the future, have the information they need to make informed decisions about their sexuality. Comprehensive, age-appropriate, evidence-based sexuality education that includes information and access to female and male condoms is a fundamental element of preventing HIV transmission among young people.

2. Involve Young People Living with HIV in the Policy Decisions that Affect their Lives

- Many young people have lived with HIV and/or AIDS from birth, and across all populations, adolescents and young adults are the most likely to be exposed to HIV (UNAIDS 2008). Hence, creating partnerships with youth is crucial to ensuring quality, youth-friendly, rights-based program design, implementation, and evaluation in PEPFAR.

3. Integrate Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS-Related Services for Young People

- Young people in need of HIV prevention, treatment and care services are often also in need of reproductive health services like contraception or screening for sexually transmitted infections. PEPFAR should prioritize linkages between HIV and AIDS services and reproductive health programs for youth and subsidize condom and contraceptive services for young people in need.

We hope that your administration will embrace these policy and program priorities to ensure young people are equipped with the information and tools to prevent transmission of HIV and to lead healthy, productive lives.

| Name | Address | Zip Code | Email | Signature |
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Sponsored by: Advocates for Youth, Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE), Sexuality Information Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

For more information, go to www.amplifyyourvoice.org/WorldAIDSDay