



until it's over

AIDS ACTION

memorandum

To:	Presidential Transition Team
From:	Rebecca Haag, AIDS Action Council
Re:	High Priority Issues – Transition
Date:	December 5, 2008

Analysis of HIV/AIDS Priority Issues for Immediate Action**Recommended High Priority Issues for Immediate Action:**

President-Elect Obama should continue to focus on the domestic HIV/AIDS issues that he has previously highlighted as part of his campaign plan, “Barack Obama and Joe Biden: Fighting HIV/AIDS Worldwide.” This plan has widespread support throughout the HIV community and will allow him to announce plans towards achievement of the goals. In particular we recommend remaining focused on the creation and implementation of a National AIDS Strategy. Additional immediate activities for the administration covered by the campaign’s plan (and including the Democratic National Platform) are below. The campaign should consider specifically highlight the National AIDS Strategy along with some or all of these issues on World AIDS Day.

1. “Implement a National HIV/AIDS Strategy”

A. Affirm that within the first 100 days the President will appoint a panel of experts on HIV/AIDS to develop a National AIDS Strategy with targeted outcomes, measurable goals, timelines and accountability.

B. Call on Congress to pass \$1.4 million in FY 2009 appropriations funding for the Office of National AIDS Policy to coordinate development of the National AIDS Strategy.

(Also supported in Democratic National Platform, NAS, AIA, CoC, NWAC, SAA documents, and directly supported by more than 350 local and national HIV/AIDS and other health organizations)

2. “Fix the Nation’s Healthcare System”

Allow ADAP payments to count towards Medicare Part D True Out of Pocket (TrOOP) costs. Doing so will let people living with HIV who are eligible for Medicare Part D maintain their coverage and will help State AIDS Drug Assistance Programs to expand their drug formularies, end caps on programs and help thousands more people living with HIV to attain medications.

(Supported in the AIA, ADAP, CoC documents)

3. “Bring Medicaid Coverage to Low-Income, HIV-Positive Americans.”

Call on Congress to pass the “Early Treatment for HIV Act” (ETHA). Intermediate step: waive budget neutrality on public health grounds to allow states to apply for Medicaid waivers to expand Medicaid eligibility to low income individuals with HIV infection not yet disabled by AIDS.

(Supported in the Democratic National Platform, AIA documents)

4. “Fight Disparities in Minority Communities”

A. Announce support for ensuring that CDC collects better data on HIV/AIDS in communities of color.

B. Call on Congress to increase funding for the Minority AIDS Initiative by \$20.1 million in FY2009.

C. Announce support for representation of People of Color, Women and Gay Men on the President’s Advisory Commission on HIV/AIDS (PACHA) and in development of the National AIDS Strategy.

(Supported in the Democratic National Platform, CoC, NWAC documents)

5. “Improve Quality of Life for Those Living with HIV”

A. Call on Congress to Extend Ryan White CARE Act Program for three years.

B. Call on Congress to increase funding for the full Ryan White CARE Act by \$100 million in Fiscal Year 2009.



December 6, 2008

(Supported in Democratic National Platform, AIA, CoC documents)

6. “Promote AIDS Prevention”

- A. Call on Congress to discontinue funding for abstinence-only until marriage programs.
- B. Direct the Department of Health and Human Services to require all programs that receive abstinence-only-until-marriage funding to provide written assurances they will not misrepresent or provide inaccurate information regarding the effectiveness and reliability of condoms.
- C. Direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to recertify that syringe exchange is an effective intervention for reducing the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV and does not increase drug use.
- D. Call on Congress to remove the ban on the use of federal funding for syringe exchange from the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies FY 2009 Appropriations bill.

(Supported in the AIA, CivRt, and CoC documents)

6. “Assure Adequate and Safe Housing for Those Living With HIV”

- A. Call on Congress to increase funding for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program by \$15 million in FY2009.
- B. Direct HRSA HIV/AIDS Bureau (HAB) to restore the rights of states and local communities to decide how long to fund transitional housing services for people under Ryan White.

(Supported in the AIA document)

7. “Expand Funding for Research”

Call on Congress to increase funding for the National Institutes of Health by \$1.65 billion in FY2009.

(Supported in the AIA document)

8. “Expand Access to HIV/AIDS Testing for Pregnant Women”

Call on Congress and private insurers to create incentives to reimburse providers for voluntary HIV screening to be included in the routine panel of prenatal screening tests for all pregnant women.
(Note: none of the transition documents appear to address this issue. However, many HIV/AIDS organizations support routine voluntary, non-coercive testing in medical settings for pregnant women).

9. “Reauthorize and Revise PEPFAR”

Call for the Secretary of HHS to rapidly develop regulations implementing the recent change in law that allows people living with HIV to enter the U.S. as visitors or immigrants.

(Supported in the AIA, CivRt documents. Note: Although this is a global HIV issues, it is strongly supported by domestic HIV/AIDS organizations.)

Document Titles and Abbreviations:

There are 7 primary documents which reference domestic HIV/AIDS policy that are publicly available and of which we are aware. They are:

1. Framework for Developing an Effective National AIDS Strategy for the United States: October 2008 (referred to hereafter as “NAS”)
2. AIDS in America: Recommendations for the First 100 Days of Office of the 44th President of the United States (AIA)
3. Fighting AIDS in Communities of Color an Action Agenda for the Next President (CoC)
4. National AIDS Strategy for Women in the United States: Submitted by the National Women and AIDS Collective - October 2008 (NWAC)
5. Critical Civil Rights Issues for People Living with HIV/AIDS in the United States: A To Do List for the New U.S. Administration’s First 100 Days (CivRt)
6. The ADAP Coalition: Recommendations for the Next Administration and Congress Addition (ADAP)
7. The Stand Against AIDS - A Call from the Community for President Obama to Develop a National AIDS Strategy - November 2008 (SAA)



December 6, 2008

Additionally there are three domestic documents that reference HIV/AIDS which have been discussed at meetings but which are not currently available. They are:

1. Reproductive Health – document not yet available (REP)
2. LGBT Health (non-HIV) – document not yet available (LGBT)
3. Southern AIDS Coalition – document not yet available (SAC)