



February 10, 2023

Robyn Neblett Fanfair, MD, MPH
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Division of HIV Prevention
1600 Clifton Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Dr. Neblett Fanfair,

On behalf of the Federal AIDS Policy Partnership (FAPP) and the 47 undersigned organizations, we are writing to express our concern about the current funding situation in Tennessee and urge action from the Division of HIV Prevention (DHP) to ensure funds are able to reach impacted communities.

As you know, it has been reported that the State of Tennessee plans to no longer accept Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funding for HIV prevention programs, including the core surveillance and prevention program (PS18-1802) and Ending the HIV Epidemic (PS20-2010) funds. These funds are necessary for the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) to maintain a robust and effective HIV prevention program.

Using CDC funding from 18-1802 and 20-2010, Tennessee maintains and updates its state-wide surveillance system and has been able to build up and support a network of community-based organizations (CBOs), local health departments, and other HIV prevention service providers. These entities work diligently to provide accessible, affordable, and culturally competent HIV services and resources to people most vulnerable to HIV. They understand and often represent individuals in the communities served – specifically gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, transgender individuals, Black and Brown people, and people who inject drugs.

Consistent, uninterrupted HIV prevention and surveillance funding is more important than ever, as highlighted by the *Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S.* (EHE) initiative and recent experience with pandemic-related disruptions in HIV prevention services. The entities in Tennessee that receive these CDC HIV prevention and surveillance funds, both directly and indirectly from the CDC, have a history of success. Between 2008 and 2019, there was a 22.5% decrease in new HIV diagnoses in Tennessee, from 998 in 2008 to 773 in 2019. The number of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) users in the state has increased drastically, from 93 individuals in 2012 to 6,909 in 2021. Just between 2020 and 2021, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of people on PrEP increased by 44% in the state. The rejection of 18-1802 and 20-2010 funding will only exacerbate existing racial disparities in both HIV transmission rates and the use of PrEP in the state of Tennessee. In addition, through this grant funding, many of these CBO programs

have been able to secure discounted-cost medications, including PrEP and post-exposure prophylaxis, and generate significant savings as CDC-funded, covered entities participating in the 340B Drug Pricing Program. These successes will not be possible unless CDC can quickly ensure the continuity of this funding in Tennessee.

We urge the CDC to do the following:

- Find alternative funding mechanisms for Tennessee grantees receiving 18-1802 and/or 20-2010 from the TDH, through May 31, 2023 (given plans not to accept the CDC funding beyond this date).
- Establish a protocol in the event a similar situation occurs in other jurisdictions.
 - The protocol should be applicable to funding mechanisms across the National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention.
- Work directly with impacted CBOs, local health departments, and other HIV prevention service providers.
 - Once CDC has received official notification from Tennessee, CDC should convene listening sessions to understand and better respond to immediate and future needs. This is especially critical for the CBOs.

We strongly urge you to adopt the recommendations above, and we stand ready to assist and support you in any way. If you have any questions or would like to meet to discuss more, please reach out to the FAPP co-chairs: Ace Robinson (ace@pcaf-wa.org), Kathie Hiers (kathie@aidsalabama.org), or Mike Weir (mweir@NASTAD.org).

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
African American Health Alliance
AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Alabama
AIDS Alabama South
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children,
Youth & Families
AIDS Foundation Chicago
AIDS United
Alabama Latino AIDS Coalition
American Academy of HIV Medicine
amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research
ANEA Coalition
AVAC
Big Cities Health Coalition
Birmingham AIDS Outreach
Community Access National Network
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
Five Horizons Health Services

Georgia AIDS Coalition
Health Services Center, Inc.
HealthHIV
HIV + Hepatitis Policy Institute
HIV Dental Alliance
HIV Medicine Association
Howard Brown Health
JSI
Lambda Legal
Latino Commission on AIDS
NASTAD
National Association of County and City
Health Officials
National Coalition for LGBTQ Health
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Family Planning & Reproductive
Health Association
NC AIDS Action Network
NMAC

PCAF (formerly Pierce County AIDS
Foundation)
PrEP4All
Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition
SAGE
San Francisco Community Health Center
Selma AIR

SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change
The 6:52 Project Foundation, Inc.
The AIDS Institute
Treatment Action Group
U=U plus
Vivent Health

CC: Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH
Jonathan Mermin, MD, MPH
Demetre Daskalakis, MD, MPH