



## BARACK OBAMA: FIGHTING HIV/AIDS WORLDWIDE

*"We are all sick because of AIDS - and we are all tested by this crisis. It is a test not only of our willingness to respond, but of our ability to look past the artificial divisions and debates that have often shaped that response. When you go to places like Africa and you see this problem up close, you realize that it's not a question of either treatment or prevention - or even what kind of prevention - it is all of the above. It is not an issue of either science or values - it is both. Yes, there must be more money spent on this disease. But there must also be a change in hearts and minds, in cultures and attitudes. Neither philanthropist nor scientist, neither government nor church, can solve this problem on their own - AIDS must be an all-hands-on-deck effort."*

[Barack Obama, World AIDS Day Speech, Lake Forest, CA, 12/1/06]

## BARACK OBAMA'S PLAN TO COMBAT GLOBAL HIV/AIDS

There are 40 million people across the planet infected with HIV/AIDS, including more than 1 million people in the U.S., with nearly 8,000 people dying every day of AIDS. Barack Obama believes that we must do more to fight the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as malaria and tuberculosis. In 2006, Obama traveled to Kenya and, along with his wife Michelle, took an HIV/AIDS test to encourage African men and women to be tested for the disease. Obama believes in working across party lines to combat this epidemic and joined Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS) at a large California evangelical church to promote greater investment in the global AIDS battle. As president, Obama will continue to be a global leader in the fight against AIDS.

### HIV/AIDS IN AMERICA

**Develop a National HIV/AIDS Strategy:** Obama has pledged that, in the first year of his presidency, he will develop and begin to implement a comprehensive national HIV/AIDS strategy that includes all federal agencies. The strategy will be designed to reduce HIV infections, increase access to care, and reduce HIV-related health disparities. His strategy will include measurable goals, timelines, and accountability mechanisms.

**Fix the Nation's Health Care System:** 47 million Americans are uninsured in this country. Barack Obama is committed to signing universal health care legislation by the end of his first term in office that ensures all Americans have high-quality, affordable health care coverage. Obama's plan will save a typical American family up to \$2,500 every year on medical expenditures by providing affordable, comprehensive and portable health coverage for every American; modernizing the U.S. health care system to contain spiraling health care costs and improve the quality of patient care; and promoting prevention and strengthening public health to prevent disease and protect against natural and man-made disasters. His health plan will ensure that people living with HIV have access to lifesaving treatment and care.

**Fight Disparities:** HIV has hit some communities harder than others. For example, while African-Americans make up 13 percent of the U.S. population, they make up 49 percent of new HIV/AIDS cases. AIDS is the leading cause of death in African-American women aged 25-34, and the third leading cause of death in African-American men in the same age group. In 2005, 64 percent of women living with HIV/AIDS were black. Obama will tackle the root causes of health disparities by addressing differences in access to health coverage

and promoting prevention and public health, both of which play a major role in addressing disparities. He will also challenge the medical system to eliminate inequities in health care through quality measurement and reporting, implementation of effective interventions such as patient navigation programs and diversification of the health workforce.

**Improve Quality of Life for Those Living with HIV/AIDS:** Obama is a strong supporter of the Ryan White Care Act (RWCA), which provides critical access to life-saving treatment and care for over half a million low-income Americans with HIV/AIDS. The RWCA is one of the largest sources of federal funds for primary health care and support services for patients with HIV/AIDS. The bill was named after Ryan White, an Indiana teenager whose courageous struggle with HIV/AIDS helped educate the nation. Throughout the reauthorization process of the RWCA, Obama worked closely with RWCA service providers, the Chicago Department of Public Health, and the Illinois Department of Public Health to analyze and find ways to improve the program for Illinois and for the nation. Obama will continue to protect the multifaceted care upon which RWCA beneficiaries depend.

**Assure Adequate and Safe Housing for Those Living With HIV:** Obama supports increased funding for Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) and other pertinent housing programs. These programs aim to assure that adequate and safe housing is available for all disabled and low-income people with HIV/AIDS in the U.S.

**Expand Funding for Research:** Barack Obama will expand funding for research, especially for prevention options including a vaccine and microbicides. Microbicides are a class of products currently under development that women apply topically to prevent transmission of HIV and other infections. Obama led an effort with Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and others to introduce the Microbicide Development Act, which will accelerate the development of products that empower women in the battle against AIDS. In the United States, the percentage of women diagnosed with AIDS has quadrupled over the last 20 years. Today, women account for more than one quarter of all new HIV/AIDS diagnoses.

**Promote AIDS Prevention:** In addition to assuring access to treatment, Obama believes we need to increase the focus on preventing new infections. We cannot keep pace with treatment needs if we don't also focus on prevention. This means pursuing a strategy that relies on sound science and builds on what works. Obama supports comprehensive sex education that is age-appropriate. He supports increasing federal appropriations for science-based HIV prevention programs. Obama supports the JUSTICE Act, which would prevent transmission of HIV within the incarcerated population. He also supports legislation that would lift the ban on federal funding for needle exchange as a strategy to reduce HIV transmission among injection drug users and their partners and children.

**Bring Medicaid Coverage to Low-Income, HIV-Positive Americans:** Obama is a co-sponsor of the Early Treatment of HIV Act, which would provide Medicaid coverage to more low-income, HIV-positive Americans.

## **GLOBAL HIV/AIDS**

**Reauthorize and Revise PEPFAR:** The U.S. has dramatically increased funding for global HIV and AIDS programs through the President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), but the program has faced controversy. Obama believes that our first priority should be to reauthorize PEPFAR when it expires in 2008 and rewrite much of the bill to allow best practices – not ideology – to drive funding for HIV/AIDS programs. In addition, Obama supports adding an additional \$1 billion a year in new money over the next five years to strengthen and expand the program to Southeast Asia, India, and Eastern Europe, where the pandemic is expanding.

**Increase Investments for HIV Treatment:** Barack Obama is committed to increasing U.S. investments in the capacity building needed to ensure that poor countries are able to develop the health care infrastructure

necessary to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS, promote basic health care, reduce the spread of malaria and TB, and prevent and, if necessary, contain the spread of avian flu and other pandemics.

**Increase Contribution to the Global Fund:** Obama supports increasing U.S. contributions to the Global Fund for AIDS, malaria, and TB so that our assistance is coordinated with aid provided by other governments and private donors and so that the burden on poor countries is reduced.

**Provide Access Through Trade:** Barack Obama believes that people in developing countries living with HIV/AIDS should have access to safe, affordable generic drugs to treat HIV/AIDS. He will break the stranglehold that a few big drug and insurance companies have on these life-saving drugs. Obama supports the rights of sovereign nations to access quality-assured, low-cost generic medication to meet their pressing public health needs under the WTO's Declaration on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). He also supports the adoption of humanitarian licensing policies that ensure medications developed with U.S. taxpayer dollars are available off-patent in developing countries.

**Achieve the Millennium Development Goals:** As president, Barack Obama will double U.S. foreign assistance from \$25 billion per year to \$50 billion per year to ensure the U.S. does its share to meet the Millennium Development Goals, including halving the number of people who die of tuberculosis and/or are affected by malaria. In 2005, Obama cosponsored the International Cooperation to Meet the Millennium Development Goals Act. Barack Obama will target this new spending toward strategic goals, including helping the world's weakest states to build healthy and educated communities, reduce poverty, develop markets, and generate wealth. He will also help weak states to fight terrorism, halt the spread of deadly weapons, and build the health care infrastructure needed to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS as well as detect and contain outbreaks of avian influenza. Obama will dedicate as much funding to HIV/AIDS as possible – without cutting into other critical foreign assistance programs – to ensure a comprehensive fight against this global pandemic.

**Reduce Debt of Developing Nations:** Developing nations are amassing tremendous amounts of foreign debt that limit their economic development and make investments in public health, education, and infrastructure extremely difficult. Debt in Sub-Saharan Africa stands at \$235 billion, 44 percent of the region's gross domestic product and an increase of 33 percent since 1990. Obama would work with other developed nations and multilateral institutions to cancel remaining onerous debt while pushing reforms to keep developing nations from slipping into fiscal ruin. Obama also would better coordinate trade and development policies to use the full range of America's economic power to help developing nations reap the benefits of the global trading system. Obama cosponsored the Multilateral Debt Relief Act of 2005 to provide multilateral debt relief to Heavily Indebted Poor Countries.