

HOUSING WORKS PRESS RELEASE:

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Housing Works Calls Obama AIDS Strategy A Step Backwards, Demands More Ambitious Goals and New Funding

Contact: David Thorpe; thorpe@housingworks.org<<mailto:thorpe@housingworks.org>>; 646-210-1805 Housing Works expressed deep frustration and disappointment with

President Obama's national AIDS strategy, based on the overall content of the strategy revealed in the New York Times on Monday, July 12.

"The president's plan is so flawed that it might actually represent a step backwards in combating HIV and AIDS in the United States," said Housing Works President and CEO Charles King. "Since his days on the campaign trail, President Obama has repeatedly said that he wants to lead the fight against AIDS. Unless he commits significant new resources intended to make major inroads against the spread of HIV, he will be regarded as a leader who did next to nothing about the most devastating epidemic of our time."

The president's plan sets insufficiently ambitious goals for reducing the number of annual HIV infections in the U.S. while, at the same time, the plan fails to provide adequate funding to reach even the modest HIV prevention and treatment goals that it sets out.

Regarding the plan's modest goals, King said, "I am astonished that, after 15 months of intensive study by his administration, the president believes that the United States is only capable of reducing annual HIV infections by 25 percent. Would President Obama suggest that we only clean up 25 percent of the Gulf oil spill? Never. We have the prevention tools to dramatically reduce the spread of HIV if only we would dedicate the resources to doing so. This report does a disservice to America's young people and people of color, who are most at risk."

President Obama's national AIDS strategy does not provide any new funding to reach its stated prevention goals or its treatment goal of increasing the proportion of newly diagnosed patients connected to care within three months from 65 percent to 85 percent. The U.S. cannot afford to treat the existing population of Americans living with HIV, as evidenced by the worsening AIDS Drugs Assistance Program crisis that has left 2,300 people without access to AIDS medications

across 12 states. The Obama administration recently approved a paltry \$25 million to stem the ADAP crisis, when at least \$126 million is needed.

The president's national strategy also fails to provide any new funding for housing for poor Americans living with HIV/AIDS, even though the president's own top adviser on AIDS, White House Office of National AIDS Policy Director Jeffrey Crowley, acknowledged that housing was cited as a critical unmet need at the 14 community meetings held regarding the national AIDS strategy. The president's plan ignores mainstream scientific data showing that housing improves access to health care, prevents new HIV infections and saves money. The national AIDS strategy fails to exploit the enormous potential of housing as a structural intervention--a deep long-term solution--to halt the AIDS epidemic.

The president's domestic AIDS strategy is particularly frustrating because his global AIDS policies have been similarly anemic. Not only has President Obama violated his campaign promises and flat-funded America's overseas AIDS efforts, he has proposed cutting \$50 million from the United States contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

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ABOUT HOUSING WORKS

Housing Works is the U.S.'s largest community-based AIDS organization and the nation's largest minority-controlled AIDS organization. Since 1990, Housing Works has provided a comprehensive array of lifesaving services, such as housing, medical and dental care, meals, case management, counseling and job training, to more than 20,000 homeless or low-income New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS. For more information, visit www.HousingWorks.org<<http://www.HousingWorks.org/>>.