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National HIV/AIDS Strategy Can Lead to Dramatic Progress in Domestic Response to HIV/AIDS

For Immediate Release

SAN FRANCISCO, July 13, 2010 — Today, the White House introduced a comprehensive action plan for the U.S. response to HIV/AIDS. The landmark plan will serve as a roadmap for policymakers, community organizations, and the public on how to reduce new HIV infections, get people living with HIV into care, and decrease HIV-related health disparities in the United States. Importantly, the plan includes measurable targets and describes ways to improve management and coordination within and beyond the federal government. The announcement marks a watershed moment in the domestic response to HIV/AIDS at a time when many publicly funded programs for HIV/AIDS prevention, testing and care are in jeopardy, and waiting lists for AIDS Drug Assistance Programs have reached an all-time high.

“This is an important and long-overdue victory for the HIV/AIDS community that can lead to dramatic progress against HIV/AIDS in the United States — now, the really hard work begins,” said Barbara Kimport, interim CEO of San Francisco AIDS Foundation. “Following three years of advocacy efforts by San Francisco AIDS Foundation and others on the development of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, we must turn our attention to its funding and implementation, which will be equally challenging.”

The vision of the new Strategy is for the United States to become a place where new HIV infections are rare, and when they do occur every person — regardless of age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or social/economic status — will have unfettered access to high-quality, life-extending care, free from stigma or discrimination. It sets ambitious goals, targets and timelines, and embraces principles like evidence-based programming, regular monitoring and reporting, cross-agency coordination, focusing on groups at high risk and addressing structural issues such as housing.

“Nearly three decades into the epidemic, the National HIV/AIDS Strategy revitalizes efforts to end AIDS in the United States, and sets the stage for coordination and collaboration like never before,” said Dr. Judith Auerbach, Vice President of Science & Public Policy at San Francisco AIDS Foundation. “This plan represents the work of thousands of individuals whose leadership and input over the last three years helped it take shape. Now it is up to all of us to ensure its full funding and implementation and hold our government accountable for progress under the plan.”

The Strategy is the result of advocacy efforts that began in 2007 as the “Campaign for a National AIDS Strategy,” co-founded by San Francisco AIDS Foundation. This campaign championed the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan for the United States and was

eventually endorsed by thousands of individuals and organizations, including people living with HIV/AIDS, advocates, researchers, philanthropists, and leaders from the public and private sectors. These efforts culminated in a commitment by all 2008 presidential candidates, including then-Senator Obama, to develop a national plan if elected.

About San Francisco AIDS Foundation

San Francisco AIDS Foundation works to ensure the HIV epidemic ends in the same city where it began. By combining innovative, evidence-based programs for HIV prevention and care with bold policy initiatives focused on issues ranging from harm reduction to total health and wellness, the agency is making sustainable progress against HIV among populations most vulnerable to the disease. Established in 1982, San Francisco AIDS Foundation refuses to accept that HIV transmission is inevitable.

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