



December 10, 2019

Admiral Brett P. Giroir, MD
Assistant Secretary for Health
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Admiral Giroir,

On behalf of the Partnership to End the HIV, STD, and Hepatitis Epidemics, a coalition of five of the nation's leading organizations focused on infectious diseases, we are writing to express the need to include STDs, hepatitis, and housing programming in the Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Plan for America.

We are pleased that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Indian Health Service (IHS), and National Institutes of Health (NIH) are collaborating to end the HIV epidemic and supporting jurisdictions in the development of their Ending the HIV Epidemic. We know that any new efforts for Ending the HIV Epidemic must build on already existing and supportive public health efforts, including programs that work to address and prevent STDs and viral hepatitis, as well as housing for people living with HIV. Both STD and hepatitis prevention programs overlap with HIV prevention, often serving the same population. With 10 percent of STD cases leading to HIV infection and 25 percent of people living with HIV also living with hepatitis C, STD and hepatitis programs are important actors in HIV prevention. STD and hepatitis prevention programs and clinics provide a unique opportunity to test for HIV, link people to care, and expand access to PrEP.

We implore the federal government to ensure that jurisdictions are including STD, hepatitis, and housing programs in their Ending the Epidemic plans. We believe that it is a disservice to not mention the importance of cross departmental and program engagement with STD and hepatitis programs, particularly as the community works to leverage more support and resources for this cause, and to break down siloed programming. We are concerned about the omission of reference to STD or hepatitis program engagement in Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) PS19-1906: Strategic Partnerships and Planning to Support Ending the HIV Epidemic in the United States Component B: Accelerating State and Local HIV Planning to End the HIV Epidemic program guidance.

While we recognize that CDC and HRSA might be aware of the importance of partnership between HIV, STD, and hepatitis prevention, jurisdictions should be encouraged to maintain these partnerships. Which is why it is vital that the Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative specifically spells out the importance of fostering a partnership with STD and hepatitis programs, and housing programs. By not encouraging engagement of these programs as part of Ending the

HIV Epidemic, we are wasting an important opportunity for diagnosing, treating, and preventing new HIV cases.

To this end, we are requesting that CDC and HRSA communicate unequivocally to jurisdictions about the importance of engaging with STD and hepatitis programs as they work to develop, refine, and implement their plans, and to ensure that any future guidance or documents about the Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative from the Administration specifically mention such programs.

We recognize that this is a unique moment in history, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to make ending HIV within our lifetimes a reality.

Sincerely,



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