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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jessica Bassett, 518-593-7628, jessica@healthgap.org

MORE THAN 200 SCIENTISTS, RESEARCHERS AND CLINICIANS INCLUDING THE CO-DISCOVERER OF HIV DENOUNCE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION POLICIES THAT UNDERMINE THE GLOBAL HIV RESPONSE

More than 200 HIV scientists, researchers and clinicians – including Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, a virologist and Nobel Laureate who co-discovered HIV; Linda-Gail Bekker, President of the International AIDS Society; and the HIV Medicine Association – have signed an open letter to U.S. President Donald Trump denouncing the deterioration of evidence-based policymaking during his administration. The letter was released today on the final day of the annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in Boston, Massachusetts. CROI is the preeminent HIV research meeting in the world and attracts more than 4,000 HIV/AIDS research leaders internationally. The conference has facilitated the presentation of important discoveries in the field and accelerated progress in HIV/AIDS research.

On this last day of the conference, scientists, researchers, and clinicians spoke out against actions taken during the Trump presidency, which has been marked by a dramatic decline of evidence-based policymaking and repeated attempts to slash funding for scientific research.

The full text of the letter and list of signatories follows:

We, the undersigned, are HIV clinicians, researchers and scientists responding to the AIDS epidemics around the world and in the U.S.

We are gravely concerned by President Trump's pursuit of policies that are out of step with evidence. The most recent examples include:

President Trump’s Fiscal Year 2019 Budget proposal to the U.S. Congress that contains at least $1.284 billion in cuts to life saving global HIV programs, when no less than $850 million in additional funding is needed for PEPFAR, and a full $1.35 billion in funding for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Analyses by UNAIDS show that a surge in global AIDS funding is needed now, in order to accelerate treatment and prevention and attain control of the epidemic by 2030.

Reinstatement and expansion of the Mexico City Policy, now called "Protecting Life in Global Health Assistance." This policy blocks U.S. funding for non-U.S. organizations that use non-U.S. government sources of funding to provide abortion counseling or referrals, advocate to decriminalize abortion or expand abortion services. Expansion of this policy to include PEPFAR and all other health development assistance will reduce the standard of sexual and reproductive care provided to women living with and at risk for HIV.

The establishment of the Conscience and Religious Freedom Division at the Department of Health and Human Services, and the proposed rule regarding "Protecting Statutory Conscience Rights in Health Care," an Executive action that, if enacted, would provide license for health care providers to discriminate against their patients.

Proposed cuts to the National Institutes of Health, specifically the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and the Fogarty International Center, which if enacted would slow urgently needed HIV basic and implementation research and impair work to build research capacity in partner nations to fight HIV.

Science shows us that we can defeat HIV, but not if we defy evidence.

President Trump’s misguided budget proposal, and his Administration’s attempts to scale up policies in defiance of evidence will only undermine the global AIDS response and should be stopped.

Signed,
Initial signatories:

**Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, PhD**  
Nobel Prize in Medicine 2008  
Professor, Pasteur Institute and Research Director, INSERM

**Max Essex, DVM, PhD**  
Lasker Professor of Health Sciences, Harvard University  
Chair, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health AIDS Initiative (HAI)  
Chair, Botswana Harvard AIDS Institute Partnership

**Linda-Gail Bekker MBChB, DTMH, DCH, FCP(SA), PhD**  
Deputy Director, Desmond Tutu HIV Center  
President, International AIDS Society

**Wafaa El-Sadr MD, MPH**  
Director, International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs (ICAP)  
Director, Center for Infectious Disease Epidemiologic Research, Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health

**Paul Volberding, MD**  
Professor of Medicine and Associate Chair for Global Health, Department of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco  
Director, The AIDS Research Institute and Co-Director, The Center for AIDS Research

**Salim Abdool Karim, MBChB, PhD, DSc**  
Director, Centre for the AIDS Program of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA)  
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa  
Adjunct Professor of Medicine, Weill Medical College, Cornell University  
CAPRISA Professor for Global Health, Department of Epidemiology, Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health

**Jose Zuniga, PhD, MPH**  
President, International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (IAPAC)

**Anton Pozniak, MD**  
President-elect, International AIDS Society  
Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS

**Connie Celum, MD, MPH**  
Professor, Departments of Medicine and Global Health  
Director, International Clinical Research Center, Department of Global Health  
Adjunct Professor, Department of Epidemiology, University of Washington

**Chris Beyrer, MD, MPH**  
Immediate Past President, International AIDS Society  
Director, Center for Public Health and Human Rights  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

**Diane Havlir, MD**  
Professor of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco  
Chief of HIV/AIDS, San Francisco General Hospital

**Donna Futterman, MD**  
Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the Director of the Adolescent AIDS Program, Children’s Hospital at Montefiore

**Francois Venter, MD, FCP**  
Deputy Executive Director, Wits Reproductive Health & HIV Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand
Frank D. Goebel, MD  
Professor Emeritus, Infectious Diseases, University of Munich, Germany

Judith Feinberg, MD, FACP, FIDSA  
Professor, Behavioral Medicine & Psychiatry  
Professor, Medicine/Infectious Diseases  
West Virginia University School of Medicine

Carole Treston, RN, MPH, ACRN, FAAN  
Executive Director, National Association of Nurses in AIDS Care

Kathryn Anastos, MD  
Professor of Medicine, Epidemiology and Population Health  
Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Kenneth Mayer, MD  
Professor, Harvard Medical School  
Professor, Harvard School of Public Health  
Attending Physician & Director of HIV Prevention Research, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

Matthew Kavanagh, PhD  
Georgetown University

Pedro Cahn, MD, PhD  
Director, Fundación Huesped  
Professor of Infectious Diseases, Buenos Aires University Medical School

Perry Halkitis, PhD, MS, MPH  
Dean | Rutgers School of Public Health

Peter Mugyenyi, MBChB, DCH, FRCPI, FRCPE, ScD  
Founder, Joint Clinical Research Center on AIDS (JCRC), Uganda

Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH  
Division of Infectious Diseases, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School  
Associate Director of the Program in Epidemiology and Outcomes Research, Harvard Center for AIDS Research

Stefano Vella, MD  
Center for Global Health  
The Italian National Institute of Health

John W. Mellors, MD  
Professor of Medicine  
Chief, Division Infectious Diseases  
Endowed Chair for Global Elimination of HIV and AIDS  
University of Pittsburgh

Sten H. Vermund, MD, PhD  
Anna M.R. Lauder Professor of Public Health  
Dean | Yale School of Public Health

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

(Affiliations provided to individual endorsements are for identification purposes only.)

Complete list signatories as of March 6, 2018:

1. Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, PhD, Nobel Laureate
2. Linda-Gail Bekker MBChB, DTMH, DCH, FCP(SA), PhD
3. Anton Pozniak, MD
4. Carole Treston, RN, MPH, ACRN, FAAN
5. Chris Beyrer, MD
6. Connie Celum, MD, MPH
7. Diane Havlir, MD
8. Donna Futterman, MD
9. Francois Venter, MD, FCP
10. Judith Feinberg, MD, FACP, FIDSA
11. Kathryn Anastos, MD
12. Kenneth Mayer, MD
13. Max Essex, DVM, PhD
14. Mardge Cohen, MD
15. Paul Volberding, MD
16. Pedro Cahn, MD, PhD
17. Perry Halkitis, PhD, MS, MPH
18. Peter Mugyenyi, MBChB, DCH, FRCPI, FRCPE, ScD
19. Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH
20. Stefano Vella, MD
21. Sten H. Vermund, MD, PhD
22. Wafaa El-Sadr, MD, MPH, MPA
23. Adaora Adimora, MD, MPH
24. Alexander Morse, MPH
25. Alexandra Calmy, PhD
26. Gregg Gonsalves, PhD
27. Alison Case, MD
28. Alison Roxby, MD, MSc
29. Amir Mohareb, MD
30. Andrea Ciaranello, MD, MPH
31. Andrew Trotter, MD, MPH
32. Angelo Seda, RN
33. April Soto, MD
34. Ashley Moore, MSW, LSW
35. Asia Russell
36. Bobby Cohen, MD
37. Brian Williams, PhD
38. Brittany Herrick, MPH
39. Bruno Spire MD, PhD
40. Carlos del Rio, MD
41. Carmen Portillo, RN, PhD, FAAN
42. Carol Dawson-Rose, RN
43. Cassandra Pierre, MD, MPH
44. Celicia Serenata, MBA
45. Charlie Ferrusi, MPH
46. Christie Lyn Costanza, MPH, CHES, CCRC
47. Christopher Noble, MPH
48. Clinton Trout, MA, MPH, DrPH
49. Colleen Kelley, MD, MPH
50. Dalmacio Flores, PhD
51. Daniel Kuritzkes, MD
52. Daniela Garone, MD
53. Dara Winfield, FNP
54. David Stein, MD
55. David Vance, PhD, MGS, MS
56. Deborah Gustafson, MS, PhD
57. Debra Kosko, DNP, MN, FNP-BC
58. Demetre Daskalakis, MD, MPH
59. Donna Gallagher PhD, ANP
60. Donna Gullette, PhD, APRN
61. Donna Sabatino, RN, ACRN
62. Edward Pilkington, MD
63. Elisabeth Szumilin, MD
64. Elizabeth Bukusi, MBChB, MD, MPH, PhD
65. Elizabeth Holt, MSN, ANP-BC, WHNP-BC, AAHIVS
66. Elizabeth Prohasky, MPH
67. Emilia Iwu, RN, MSN, APN-C, FWACN
68. Erin Athey, DNP, FNP-BC, RN
69. Francois-Xavier MBOPI-KEOU, DBIOL, MPhil, MSc, PhD
70. Frank D. Goebel, MD
71. Gilles Van Cutsem, MD, MPH
72. Gustavo Velásquez, MD, MPH
73. Gregg Gonsalves, PhD
74. Gwen Childs, PhD
75. Harlan Pruden
76. Harry Heiman, MD, MPH
77. Henry Nguyen, FNP-BC, AAHIVS
78. Hugues Fischer
79. Ibra Ndoye, MD
80. Igho Ofotokun, MD
81. Ingrid Bassett, MD, MPH
82. Jared Baeten, MD
83. J. Craig Phillips, PhD, LLM, RN, ARNP, ACRN, FAAN
84. James Gordon, MD
85. James Sosman, MD
86. Janet Turan, PhD
87. Janitzio Guzman, MD
88. Jason Leider, MD, PhD
89. Jeffrey Kwong, DNP, MPH, ANP-BC, ACRN, AAHIVS
90. Jean-François Delfraissy, MD, PhD
91. Jeanne Kemppainen, PhD, RN, FAAN
92. Jennifer Cohn, MD, MPH
93. Jennifer Fisher, FNP
94. Jennifer Pisano, MD
95. Jessica Schmitt, LCSW
96. Jina Saltzman, PA
97. John Martin, MD
98. John Mellors, MD
99. John Nelson, PhD, CNS, CPNP
100. Jonathan Colasanti, MD, MSPH
101. Jonathan Lio, MD
102. Jose M. Zuniga, PhD, MPH
103. Judy Wessell, DNP, APRN-BC, AAHIVS
104. Kate M. Guthrie, PhD
105. Kathleen Bernock, FNP-BC, AAHIVS, AACRN
106. Kathryn Foley, MD
107. Katrin Sadigh, MD
108. Keanan McGonigle, medical student
109. Kim Scarsi, PharmD
110. Kim Sigaloff, MD, PhD
111. Kimberly Adams Tufts, DNP, WHNP-BC, FAAN
112. Kirsten Corrigan, MHA
113. Kristi Stringer, PhD
114. LaRon E. Nelson, PhD, RN, FNP, FNAP, FAAN
115. Lawrence Siegel, MD
116. Leela Davies, MD, PhD
117. Lindsay Gordon
118. Lisa Abuogi, MD
119. Lisa Cosimi, MD
120. Lori Bollinger, PhD
121. Lori Heise, PhD
122. Luckyboy Edison Mkhondwane
123. Lucy Bradley-Springer, PhD, RN, ACRN, FAAN
124. Mai Pho, MD, MPH
125. Maithe Enriquez, PhD, RN, ANP-BC, FAAN
126. Matthew Kavanagh, PhD
127. Marc D. Angel, PhD
128. Melanie Steilen, RN, BSM, ACRN
129. Melanie Thompson, MD
130. Michael Hall
131. Michael Relf, PhD, RN, ACNS-BC, AACRN, CNE, FAAN
132. Michaela Muller-Trutwin, PhD
133. Michelle Kohler, RN
134. Mildred Williamson, PhD, LCSW
135. Mitchell Warren
136. Mitchell J. Wharton, PhD, RN, FNP-BC, CNS
137. Nancy Hessol, MSPH
138. Nathan Linsk, PhD
139. Nina Sublette, PhD, APRN-BC
140. Patricia Daoust, MSN, RN
141. Paul Zeitz, DO, MPH
142. Peter Reiss, MD
143. Peter Wiessner
144. Petros Isaakidis, MD, PhD
145. Praphan Phanuphak, MD, PhD
146. Raph Hamers, MD, PhD
147. Raquel Ramos, PhD, MSN, MBA, FNP-BC
148. Regina LaRocque, MD, MPH
149. Renslow Sherer, MD
150. Ricardo Rivero, MD, MPH
151. Richard Murphy, MD
152. Roger P. Clark, DO
153. Rosalind Coleman MD, MPH
154. Rouguy Balde, MD, MPH
155. Ryan O’Connell, MS, CHES
156. Salim Abdool Karim, MBChB, PhD, DSc
157. Sara Yeatman, PhD
158. Scott Dryden-Peterson, MD
159. Shahin Lockman, MD
160. Sharon Hillier, PhD
161. Sheila Davis, DNP, ANP-BC, FAAN
162. Sheldon Fields, PhD, RN, FAAN
163. Simeon Kimmel, MD, MA
164. Sinead Delany-Morelwe, PhD
165. Steffanie Sabbaj, PhD
166. Susan L. Gaston, MSN, RN
167. Susan Michaels-Strasser, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN
168. Tamara Hardoby, MPH
169. Tobias Rinke de Wit, PhD
170. Tom Ellman, MD
171. Tomas Maira-Litran, PhD
172. Tomiko Stein, MD, MPH
173. Tonia Poteat, PhD, MPH, PA-C
174. Tooba Imtiaz, MPH
175. Tracey Wilson, PhD
176. Veronica Njie-Carr, PhD, RN, ACNS-BC, FWACN
177. Virginia Lipke, RN, MHA, ACRN, CIC
178. William Towner, MD
179. AIDS-Free World
180. AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA)
181. American Sexual Health Association
182. Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
183. AVAC
184. Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
185. Coalition for Children Affected by AIDS
186. HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA)
187. Health GAP (Global Access Project)
188. India HIV Alliance
189. International Civil Society Support
190. Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD)
191. International HIV/AIDS Alliance
192. International Association of Providers of AIDS Care
193. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
194. Pan African Positive Women's Coalition-Zimbabwe
195. Réseau Accès aux Médicaments Essentiels (RAME)
196. Salamander Trust
197. Tendo’s World (Arts in Health)
198. The Thai Red Cross AIDS Research Centre
199. Treasureland Health Builders Initiative
200. UBtheCURE LLC
201. The Well Project
202. West and Central Regional HIV Research and Training Reference Center Hospital, Fann University Teaching Hospital – Dakar, Senegal

For running list of signatories, visit www.healthgap.org/croi