

# PRESIDENTIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HIV/AIDS

February 1, 2001

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Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (Council), I am writing to urge your strong support for the continuation of Executive Order #13155 entitled, "Access to HIV/AIDS Pharmaceuticals and Medical Technologies." By recognizing the need for bold action to expand access to affordable HIV/AIDS treatments, this policy represents a lifeline to millions and is entirely consistent with international trade agreements to which the U.S. is a party.

There are currently 36.1 million people living with HIV/AIDS, including 25 million people in Africa alone. The vast majority of these individuals have no access to promising HIV treatments due to their exorbitant cost, which for many developing countries far exceeds per capita spending on all health issues.

Indeed, it is the magnitude of economic and social upheaval that is expected to result from current levels of morbidity and mortality that last year prompted the United Nations Security Council to recognize HIV/AIDS as a global security threat. As the Council itself stated in its September 2000 report *AIDS – No Time to Spare*, the U.S. role in the global pandemic will require careful coordination, sustained political will and financial resources proportionate to need.

The importance of allowing the importation of generic drugs was underscored just this past week in a New York Times Magazine article that chronicled Brazil's remarkable achievements in this regard. Through a national care plan that is premised on generic drugs, between 1997 and 2001, Brazil has managed to reduce HIV drug costs by 79% and is now providing near universal access to state-of-the-art care to people with HIV. As the Brazil experience shows, giving countries flexibility to follow innovative approaches sanctioned by international law -- in the context of this global health emergency -- is truly the difference between life and death for HIV-infected people in poor countries.

We look forward to working with you and members of your Administration on the many important HIV/AIDS issues facing the U.S., both at home and abroad. Please support this order, and in so doing, send a clear message that the U.S. will not retreat in the fight against AIDS.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Ronald V. Dellums  
Chair

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cc: Tommy G. Thompson, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services  
Eric Goosby, M.D., Department of Health and Human Services

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