Biden’s America Must Include People Living With HIV:
Advocates Meet With Biden Campaign Staffers To Call For A Plan To End AIDS By 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 22, 2020 – ACT NOW: END AIDS (ANEA), a national coalition of community-based organizations, health departments, and national organizations committed to ending AIDS as an epidemic in the United States, met with representatives from Biden For America for a formal listening session and information exchange on Monday, September 14th.

Participants spoke to the impact of HIV and AIDS on their communities and the necessity of a commitment from any forthcoming Presidential administration to adhere to an Ending the Epidemic (ETE) framework that endeavors to end the US HIV epidemic by 2025. While ANEA applauds the participation of campaign representatives, we are greatly disappointed that we have had no meaningful exchange with either former VP Biden or his running mate, Sen. Harris.

Both candidates have demonstrated an understanding of the medical and healthcare goals of the ETE framework. Senator Harris notably put forward the 2019 PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) Access and Coverage Act to require insurance companies to cover PrEP, a daily medication that can prevent the acquisition of HIV. However, a Presidential ETE plan must include unrelenting advocacy against the oppression embedded in this nation’s structural determinants of health.

“It is disheartening to see presidential candidates say that they support Black Lives Matter, but not speak up for Black trans women and Black trans men as they experience so much violence,” said Deondre Moore, U.S. Engagement & Community Partnerships Manager of Prevention Access Campaign.

The intent of Monday’s listening session was for the former VP and Sen. Harris to hear first-hand stories from community activists and advocates who have been working fervently toward change, most for decades. We thanked the campaign staff who attended for their time and interest while verbalizing that this meeting is simply not enough. A conceivable end of the HIV epidemic requires the political will to address the systemic barriers that are the real drivers of the epidemic.

“Vice President Biden’s support is critical to reversing the longest standing decline in life expectancy due to suicide and drug overdose. COVID-19, overdose, HIV, and racism are pushing vulnerable people further into society’s bulging margins,” said Monique Tula, Executive Director of the National Harm Reduction Coalition.
Increasing resources commensurate with needs of communities regardless of any individual’s migrant status, geographic location, or identity, will bring the US closer to ending the epidemic.

“Leadership from the most vulnerable individuals in America right now—Black and Latinx communities, women, transgender communities, gay and bisexual men, migrants, communities of color, people living with HIV, sex workers, and drug-users— is what this country needs. Reversing harmful executive orders and committing future legislation to restrict executive interruptions that make EHE work any harder are critical at this juncture,” said Dázon Dixon Diallo, Founder and President of SisterLove, Inc.

“People in the South, especially rural South, are confronting challenges that most of those in metropolitan areas never have had to face. COVID-19 has unmasked the basic underlying racism that has been part of this country since the beginning,” said Aryah Lester, Deputy Director of Transgender Strategy Coalition.

We invite the Democratic candidates to spend more time with ANEA and hope they take the real initiative to work with the extended community to achieve an end to the epidemic by 2025.

**About EtE**

“Ending the Epidemic” is the framework ANEA uses to describe independent community-led initiatives. In November of 2018, more than 250 global, national, regional, state, and local organizations called on the federal government to end the HIV epidemic by 2025 in a policy paper. The document, titled *Ending the HIV Epidemic in the United States: A Roadmap for Federal Action* demands that the federal government enact legislative and regulatory changes to achieve this goal.

**Note:** ANEA requested a meeting with the incumbent president’s team to no avail. The content of this statement does not express the views of all members of the ANEA Coalition or our government partners.