



The Global AIDS Policy Partnership (GAPP) commends the work done by the IHR Review Committee, the IPPPR, and the IOAC in developing recommended procedures and policies to strengthen global preparedness and response to pandemic threats.

The GAPP is a coalition of over 70 advocacy and implementing organizations committed to expanding and improving global HIV/AIDS programming. Our members have been working in HIV for decades and are very familiar with the difficulty in securing global financial commitment to fight disease. However, COVID-19 has clearly shown us that without strong international cooperation, there is no stopping pandemic threats from reaching around the world, including to the US and other donor countries. Current commitments to the COVID-19 ACT-A, Gavi, and other multilateral funds are insufficient to protect the world against current and future threats. The US government must commit to improving its own response and, along with securing commitments from other donor countries, ensuring that all other countries are at a sufficient level of preparedness to prevent outbreaks from becoming global. This is a long-term, constant commitment that must be made now, or all economic and social gains of decades of global investment in health will be threatened and historical investments will be for naught.

We know that vaccine distribution has been widely inequitable, causing global economic losses of \$1.5 trillion to \$9.2 trillion according to the International Chamber of Commerce. The good news is that studies have documented that for every dollar invested in vaccines, \$5 would be returned in economic growth. We must invest in both vaccines and other public health investments to address multiple concurrent pandemics in many countries. It is crucial that we strengthen health care facilities, the health workforce, and supply chains and provide PPE, particularly since we are seeing substantial impacts to most global health programming, including the decades of investment in the fight against HIV.

Our coalition's expertise and experience compels us to emphasize the need to, in emergencies, rely first on the resources and infrastructure that is already available. Multiple communicable diseases, including HIV, TB, and malaria, have started from small cases and grown to become endemic globally due to lack of early attention and response. These diseases currently have strong programs running in many countries that can be utilized in the response to COVID-19. For example, health workers that are already undertaking community outreach visits can roll COVID-19 testing into those visits. Health workers that routinely see patients, many of whom

are immunocompromised and thus at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, can assist in vaccination campaigns to ensure a sufficient workforce to deliver those vaccines. Utilizing the programmatic infrastructure that already exists to fight pandemics is essential to making the response to COVID-19 as efficient as possible, knowing that inequities already exist and people cannot wait any longer than necessary to receive services that will end the threat.

International collaboration needs to continue and be accelerated at the scientific level. As the IPPPR report *COVID-19: Make it the Last Pandemic* notes:

The COVID-19 response benefited from years of effort to expand capacities for R&D to address potential pandemics. Expertise and technology from decades of work—especially on HIV, Ebola and cancer vaccine research and immunology—were available and ready to apply to the new virus.

The scientific collaboration seen from the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic must continue even when a new pandemic has not reared its head.

The focus is, understandably so, on the COVID-19 response. But the WGPR cannot forget the need to rebuild and continue essential health services around the world. Gains made in the fight against HIV, TB, malaria, and global vaccination campaigns cannot be set back now, or there will only continue to be massive funding requirements to fight diseases that we were already on track to end. We urge the US to be stalwart in its negotiations with other WHO Member States in urging robust commitment to global health, knowing the consequences of neglect. Every pandemic ended makes us more resilient and ready for future health threats while also improving the overall health and well being of communities the world over.