



Obama on AIDS: "We are winning this fight"

By GoPride.com News Staff

December 1, 2011

<http://chicago.gopride.com/news/article.cfm/articleid/24031449>

Obama: "We can beat this disease" - President sets bold new goals on fighting AIDS

WASHINGTON, DC -- Speaking at an event in Washington, D.C. to mark World AIDS Day, President Barack Obama announced bold new initiatives in the fight to combat AIDS.

"Few could have imagined that we'd be talking about the real possibility of an AIDS-free generation. But we are," Obama said at a World AIDS Day event attended by U2 lead singer Bono, singer Alicia Keys and Florida Republican Senator Marco Rubio.

"So make no mistake, we are winning this fight. But the fight is not over, not by a long shot," he said.

The president set a goal of getting antiretroviral drugs to 2 million more people around the world by the end of 2013. In addition, the U.S. will aim to get the drugs to 1.5 million HIV-positive pregnant women to prevent them from passing the virus to their children.

The new global goals focus on prevention, treatment and support programs in 15 countries hard-hit by the AIDS epidemic, 12 of them in Africa.

Obama said he would direct the Department of Health and Human Services to increase funding for domestic HIV and AIDS treatment by \$50 million. The bulk of the new funding - \$35 million - will go to state programs that help HIV/AIDS patients get medicine.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that there are more than 1.2 million people in the United States currently living with HIV. One in five of those are unaware they are infected.

"The rate of new infections may be going down elsewhere, but it's not going down here in America," said Obama. "There are communities in this country being devastated still by this disease. When new infections among young, black, gay men increase by nearly 50 percent in three years, we need to do more to show them that their lives matter."

African Americans are disproportionately affected by HIV - while representing approximately 14 percent of the population, they account for approximately 44 percent of new infections. HIV is the third leading cause of death for African American men and women age 35-44.

Former Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton also spoke at the event via satellite.