

**Press Release  
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**Guyana and America Building on Success in Fighting AIDS**  
Opinion Editorial by US Embassy Charge d'Affaires Thomas Pierce

World AIDS Day is both a day of remembrance and a day of celebration. We must all remember those who have lost their lives to AIDS. It's in their honor that we work each day to provide HIV prevention, treatment and care to millions across the globe.

Yet, it's also a day to celebrate those whose lives have been improved and saved in Guyana and throughout the world, thanks to global efforts to fight this devastating disease. On this World AIDS Day, it is important to remember that we have a shared responsibility to build on the success achieved to date by making smart investments that will ultimately save more lives.

And there is much success to build on. In Guyana, the United States, through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), directly supported life-saving antiretroviral treatment for 3,030 men, women and children, as of September 2010. Locally, PEPFAR has directly assisted 7,189 people, including 1,964 orphans and vulnerable children, with care and support programs. PEPFAR's efforts around prevention of mother-to-child transmission programs have allowed nearly 96 percent of babies of HIV-positive mothers to be born HIV-free.

Building on the success of PEPFAR and other global health programs, President Barack Obama has also put forward an ambitious Global Health Initiative, which will support coordinated programs aimed at reducing lives lost from HIV/AIDS and other health challenges. And through U.S. investments in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, many more people will benefit from prevention, care and treatment.

Working with the Government of Guyana, we are also becoming smarter about how we're making investments, with the goal of saving more lives. Experience here and elsewhere has taught us how to use every dollar invested in battling HIV/AIDS more effectively and efficiently. This means each dollar is going a little further, allowing us to do more to combat HIV/AIDS, and address issues across the global health spectrum. It also means that we can now measure our

success not just in dollars invested, but in the ultimate measure of success – lives improved and saved.

Over the last six years PEPFAR Guyana has contributed millions of dollars to sustainable development in the health sector, with investments in the Materials Management Unit (MMU) through the Supply Chain Management Systems Project and the National Public Health Institute (NPHI) that houses the National Care and Treatment Centre (NCTC) and the National Public Health Reference Laboratory (NPHRL), supported by the CDC Cooperative Agreement.

The investment in the MMU has improved the Ministry’s capacity to deliver life-saving antiretrovirals (ARVs) and other essential health care commodities. It has also strengthened and expanded Guyana’s supply chain management system, thus ensuring secure, reliable, cost-effective and sustainable pharmaceutical and health commodities are available to meet the care and treatment needs of people living with HIV and AIDS.

The NPHI houses the NCTC formerly called the “GUM Clinic,” and thousands of patients are treated annually in a professional and friendly environment. The investment in the NPHRL has improved the Ministry’s diagnostic capability and management of not only HIV but many other communicable diseases. NPHRL has the capability to respond to outbreak of diseases in a timely manner.

Together, these investments will contribute to the long term health of the people of Guyana.

On this World AIDS Day, we honor the lives lost and celebrate the lives saved, but we cannot rest. Working together, we must remain dedicated to building on success by making smart investments to save even more lives.

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