Trump White House Erases, Silences HIV, LGBTQ and Health Content

Plus: Trump's attacks on diversity and equity could impair clinical trials and reverse anti-discrimination protections for employees.

January 24, 2025 By Trent Straube

President Donald Trump was sworn in Monday, January 20. Within five days, the new administration has purged the White House website and several federal health websites of much LGBTQ and HIV content. For example, advocates noted that the HIV Language Guide, an online resource from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is no longer available.

In a related effort, the Trump administration has placed all federal diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) employees on paid leave, with plans for them to be laid off, reports The Associated Press. Trump also issued an executive order revoking federal civil rights protections and cutting back DEI programs; according to the Williams Institute, the order reverses protections for transgender federal government employees and LGBTQ employees of federal contractors.

Trump's numerous attacks on DEI efforts has also led federal agencies to strip their web pages of content focused on diversity. Of note, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) removed web pages referencing ethnic and economic diversity in clinical trials, reports STAT News. Anti-diversity efforts in clinical trials could result in the approval of drugs that do not work for the population at large, since the effects of medications may vary depending on age, sex and other factors.

STAT reported that it found 10 examples of pages related to diversity and equity that were removed from the FDA website, including draft guidance on clinical trial diversity and a slide deck on boosting enrollment in cancer clinical trials. STAT noted that the removals seemed "haphazard" and that some pages related to DEI efforts remained up.

For anyone seeking web pages that may have been purged, a valuable resource is the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine, a nonprofit library of the web found at Archive.org. (Hint: It helps to know the full URL of the page you're looking for, along with a date. Here's a helpful tutorial.)

On WhiteHouse.gov, web pages that have been removed include a fact sheet on expanding HIV prevention and treatment and LGBTQ-specific pages from the Department of State and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, notes LGBTQ media advocacy group GLAAD.

“President Trump claims to be a strong proponent of freedom of speech, yet he is clearly committed to censorship of any information containing or related to LGBTQ Americans and issues that we face,” said GLAAD president and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis in a statement. “This action proves the Trump administration’s goal of making it as difficult as possible for LGBTQ Americans to find federal resources or otherwise see ourselves reflected under his presidency. Sadly for him, our community is more visible than ever; and this pathetic attempt to diminish and remove us will again prove unsuccessful.”

A search of “HIV” or “LGBTQ” on WhiteHouse.gov yields the message “No results found.” A search of the terms “lesbian,” “gay,” “bisexual” and “queer” leads to one entry, dated January 20, 2025, titled “Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions.” This page in effect lists Biden’s executive orders that Trump revoked on day 1.

The page reads in part: “To commence the policies that will make our Nation united, fair, safe, and prosperous again, it is the policy of the United States to restore common sense to the Federal Government and unleash the potential of the American citizen.… The following executive actions are hereby revoked:… Executive Order 14075 of June 15, 2022 (Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Individuals).”

A search on WhiteHouse.gov for the term “transgender,” however, generates a flurry of related pages and articles. That’s because Trump has been vocal in attacks against trans people, who have been singled out as the subject of numerous executive orders. For example, he has revoked Biden’s order to allow transgender troops to openly serve in the military, though experts claim this does not amount to a ban and that the order doesn’t affect those currently serving.

In fact, the details of many of Trump’s executive orders remain fuzzy. Several will certainly be litigated in courts. But they are all likely to give rise to chaos and fear, leading agencies and leaders to censor and silence their departments to avoid trouble.

As we reported earlier, one of Trump’s executive orders issued on day 1 states his intent to withdraw from the World Health Organization. The Trump administration has also directed federal health agencies—including the NIH, the FDA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services—to halt all external communications. This means no breaking news alerts, press releases, health updates or social media reports—for example, warnings about bird flu outbreaks and regularly scheduled health publications, such as the CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. As a result, the MMWR was not published for the first time in 60 years. For more details, including a freeze on travel and hiring within the federal health sector, see “Trump Muzzles Federal Health Agencies, Withdraws from World Health Organization,” “So Now What? A Clarity Offering From Sero Leadership” and “As States Diverge on Immigration, Hospitals Say They Won’t Turn Patients Away.”

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