“The U.S. Government Will Not Be Commemorating World AIDS Day This Year.”

The Trump White House directs State Department employees to refrain from publicly promoting World AIDS Day, marked each December 1.

December 1, 2025 By Trent Straube

Since the 1980s, AIDS activists have proclaimed that “Silence = Death.” So what is the HIV community to make of the Trump administration’s latest decree: The White House prohibits State Department employees from “publicly promoting World AIDS Day through any communication channels.”

The annual observance day has been honored every December 1 since 1988, serving to raise awareness, commemorate those lost to the virus, support everyone living with HIV and AIDS and lift up those fighting to end the epidemic.

The theme of World AIDS Day 2025 is “Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response.” For related articles, including a calendar of events, click #World AIDS Day.

Word about the Trump White House’s new directive surfaced on social media last week, through a Substack post “The United States Cancels World AIDS Day” by advocate and author Emily Bass and through the account @AltCDC (referring to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). AltCDC purports on Bluesky to be an anonymous group of “public health experts resisting harmful policies, fighting disinformation, and defending public health from within. Not official CDC—but close enough for transmission.”

The account posted a photo of what reads like a memo directing the receiver to refrain from publicly promoting World AIDS Day.

1/ Breaking: At CDC, we’ve been told the US Government will not officially commemorate World AIDS

Day this year. No explanation given.

[image or embed]

— Alt CDC (they/them) (@altcdc.altgov.info) November 25, 2025 at 11:16 AM

The text in the photo reads:

“Please note that this guidance has now changed. This new guidance supersedes the blanket approval we shared last week.

“The U.S. Government will not be commemorating World AIDS Day this year. To comply with this new directive, please note the following:

- USG funds should not be used for an World AIDS Day—related events or commemorative activities.

- Please refrain from publicly promoting World AIDS Day through any communication channels, including social media, media engagements, speeches, or other public-facing messaging.

- CDC and other USG personnel may attend external, locally organized World AIDS Day events, but may not speak at these events or promote their attendance via social media or media channels.

“We recognize this updated guidance differs from the blanket clearance and may require adjustments to planned activities. Thank you for your flexibility and attention to these changes.”

Blowback from the HIV community was immediate, with typical comments such as: “How 1987 of them,” “I am once again incandescent with rage” and “MAGA = Make AIDS Great Again.” Others pointed out that this directive seemed right out of Project 2025, the conservative Christian playbook for Trump’s government; the plan aggressively seeks to roll back reproductive rights, sexual health programs, LGBTQ equality, the public safety net and similar efforts.

Among the outrage, a few cautious readers questioned whether the information was reliable. Could the Trump administration—which, after all, launched the Ending the HIV Epidemic plan in 2019—be so openly shameless and cruel?

Further confirmation arrived in a New York Times article published November 26 with the headline "Trump Administration Will No Longer Commemorate World AIDS Day."

Indeed, the State Department had instructed employees and grantees to not use government funds to commemorate the day and to "refrain from publicly promoting World AIDS Day through any communication channels, including social media, media engagements, speeches or other public-facing messaging."

Tommy Pigott, a spokesperson from the State Department, explained to the New York Times that "an awareness day is not a strategy. Under the leadership of President Trump, the State Department is working directly with foreign governments to save lives and increase their responsibility and burden sharing."

But as the Times notes, the Trump White House has in fact issued proclamations in support of several other awareness days this year, such as autism awareness to National Manufacturing Day.

View this post on Instagram

A post shared by National AIDS Memorial (@nationalaidsmemorial)

So why would the administration single out HIV and silence federal support of World AIDS Day—to such a degree that the government site HIV.gov doesn't include any current mentions of World AIDS Day 2025 on its homepage, blogs or social media? To anyone paying close attention to headlines this year, the White House directive doesn't come as a shock.

Soon after Trump was sworn in, for the second time, on January 20, this White House and its Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)—infamously led by a chainsaw-wielding Elon Musk—dismantled the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and slashed funding to the U.S President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), leading to disruptions and in many cases a complete halt of HIV services, including lifesaving treatment, to underdeveloped countries. At least one report estimates that the DOGE cuts caused 600,000 deaths so far this year.

What's more, Trump has been openly hostile to the World Health Organization (WHO), signing an executive order on the first day of his second term that withdrew the United States from the organization. The WHO spearheads World AIDS Day.

Similarly, the Trump administration has attacked federal efforts to support diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), notably as they apply to transgender people, women, African Americans and other minorities—precisely the populations most affected by HIV. Within a week of taking office, the Trump administration had purged several federal websites of LGBTQ and some HIV content in addition to putting DEI-related employees on leave and ending anti-discrimination efforts.

Then there's the issue of the State Department, which oversees PEPFAR. In years past, the department has produced a report to Congress coinciding with World AIDS Day that details data about the epidemic and U.S. efforts to fight it globally. Needless to say, despite the requirement to release updated information, no report has been issued.

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), however, did release a report, titled Overcoming Disruption, Transforming the AIDS Response.



View this post on Instagram

A post shared by UNAIDS (@unaidsglobal)

In fact, it remains unclear whether PEPFAR will continue to exist as a U.S. global HIV and AIDS program.

Domestic support is also a dire question. In proposals for fiscal year 2026 budgets, the Trump White House and Republican lawmakers in Congress seek to gut federal funding and support for HIV programs, including ending all CDC HIV prevention programs and the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program. (Researchers predict a 49% spike in new HIV cases—or 75,000 excess diagnoses—by 2030 if Ryan White is slashed.)

Given these facts on the ground, the theme for World AIDS Day 2025 feels especially apt: “Overcoming disruption, tranforming the AIDS response,” indeed.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/us-government-will-commemorating-world-aids-day-year