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CAAN's Response to the Cancelling of PEPFAR and USAID

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CAAN Communities, Alliances & Networks is disappointed by U.S. President Donald Trump's recent Executive Order to pause foreign assistance contributions pending a review of U.S. foreign aid programs. This effectively halted the functioning of USAID and the implementation of American global health efforts, including the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). While a limited waiver has been issued, purportedly allowing the program to restart some services, the funds and legal framework to allow them to continue have not yet been delivered. As a result, PEPFAR is unable to fully deliver its services. This uncertainty has impacted millions of people in low- and middle-income countries, and will potentially lead to a second wave of outbreaks in Canada, the United States, and other high-income countries as global health crises continue to escalate in our interconnected world.

PEPFAR, alongside hundreds of additional U.S.-funded HIV-focused organizations in low-income countries, provides over \$7.5 billion in HIV and AIDS-related testing, treatment, and prevention services. Without clear directives – and associated funding – that allow them to continue providing services, more than 20 million people will be cut off from lifesaving HIV treatments and millions will be at risk of dying. The Indigenous Peoples of these countries, like here in Canada, are disproportionately affected by HIV and rely heavily on the services of PEPFAR and other USAID-funded organizations.

An effective HIV response is a global one. We must embody the concept of ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ wahkôtowin, one of several natural Cree laws on this land called Canada. It recognizes that we are all related, and our relationships and communities are interconnected in many ways. We urge our communities both here in the land called Canada and abroad to bring attention to this critical issue. We must work together to ensure renewed commitment to HIV funding around the world and bring our principle of wahkôtowin into the space of HIV and AIDS funding and services.

“CAAN's influence extends well beyond Canada's borders, and we have played a pivotal role in international HIV initiatives, gatherings, and conferences. CAAN contributes to global dialogues on HIV, the strengthening of partnerships, advocates for the needs of Indigenous peoples living with HIV. Our engagement with major international organizations, including the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB & Malaria; the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII); and the World Health Organization (WHO) underscores our position as a respected leader in global health and human rights advocacy. We urge you to bring your voice forward alongside us to push for change and support our communities who are being and will be affected by this decision.” - Margaret Kísikâw Piyesis, okimâw (CEO) of CAAN Communities, Alliances & Networks.

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About CAAN:

[CAAN Communities, Alliances & Networks](https://www.caan.ca) is dedicated to supporting Indigenous peoples in addressing health challenges, particularly in relation to HIV/AIDS. Through advocacy, education, and community engagement, CAAN strives to create a healthier future for Indigenous communities across Canada.

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