

Statements Regarding the Viacom-Kaiser HIV/AIDS Initiative

"We know that if we fully apply what works in HIV prevention around 30 million new HIV infections would be averted by the end of the decade," said **Dr. Peter Piot, UNAIDS Executive Director**. "Saving these lives will depend on initiatives such as the one announced today by Viacom and the Kaiser Family Foundation. Viacom is taking a far-sighted view by acting to protect the millions of people its companies reach on a daily basis, as well as its employees. This initiative is setting new standards in the business response to AIDS. Using the power of a media network to fight AIDS is a twenty-first century solution to one of the twenty-first century's key problems."

Stephen Lewis, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for HIV/AIDS in Africa said, "The Viacom-Kaiser initiative is a remarkable demonstration of leadership and vision. It is precisely this kind of private commitment that is so desperately needed in the fight against HIV/AIDS. No single organization can defeat HIV/AIDS, but this disease can be stopped. The U.N Secretary-General has called on everyone to do their part to end the pandemic. This is a big step forward."

"Those of us who have witnessed the devastation of HIV/AIDS firsthand have been compelled to greater action," said **Senator Bill Frist (R-TN)**. "The new initiative of Viacom and the Kaiser Family Foundation will use their communications expertise to bring HIV/AIDS home to millions of people and help compel them to greater action, too. This epidemic is vast, and only by all of us working together -- political, corporate, and religious leaders, journalists and citizens -- can we hope to bring an end to the deadly disease of HIV/AIDS."

"Until we find a vaccine and cure, prevention is our best weapon in the fight against the spread of HIV. Education and awareness are the keys to successful prevention," said **Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)**, Democratic Whip. "The media have an unmatched ability to reach people, especially young people who comprise half of all new HIV infections. With this new initiative, the Kaiser Family Foundation and Viacom are marshaling the power of the media to give people vital information -- and with information, the power to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS."

"Viacom and the Kaiser Family Foundation are to be applauded for this innovative and far-reaching initiative," said **Congressman Jim Kolbe (R-AZ)**, Chairman of the House Foreign Operations Appropriations subcommittee. "The media can be a powerful force in educating people about the global impact the AIDS epidemic is having. "

"The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to devastate families and communities, and communities of color all too often suffer disproportionately," said **Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (D-TX)**. "We know that education and public awareness are essential tools in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and this extraordinary outreach initiative between Viacom and the Kaiser Family Foundation will provide that critical information to millions, saving lives and giving hope. We can win this fight, but only if all sectors of society work together to raise awareness about this still very real crisis."

"All that we have been able to accomplish thus far has been because of the hard work, advocacy and, when necessary, the agitation of our community groups who stand at the frontlines of the crisis in our community. More than ever, we need everyone, individuals, as well as our churches, colleges, sororities, fraternities, mass-media and other organizations to be a part of a national movement to demand health parity through quality -- that is: comprehensive, continuous, caring, compassionate, competent, and culturally and linguistically resonant -- health care for our community. I commend the Kaiser Family Foundation and Viacom Initiative for advancing the HIV/AIDS struggle and ensuring that mass-media continues to be an indispensable partner in future public private partnerships," said **Congresswoman Donna Christian-Christensen (D-VI)**.

"This effort could not come at a more critical time. Nearly one million Americans, more than ever before, are living with HIV or AIDS," said **Terje Anderson, Executive Director, National Association of People With AIDS**. "Around the world, the epidemic is growing at a frightening rate, threatening the lives of millions and millions more. This unprecedented initiative will deliver a powerful message that the AIDS epidemic demands the attention of all of us, and that, more than twenty years into the epidemic, we cannot afford to rest. Viacom and the Kaiser Family Foundation are showing the kind of leadership and action that will make a real difference in fighting this crisis."

"After more than two decades of effort, the AIDS crisis is far from over," said **Dr. Marsha Martin, Executive Director, AIDS Action**. "And we know that education and information are critical in the fight against this escalating pandemic. We also know that private sector participation is essential to our success. That's why this new initiative of Viacom and the Kaiser Family Foundation is so important. The media is one of our most powerful tools, and this initiative will not only reach millions of people with the information they need, it will also inspire others in the private sector to take a stand against AIDS."

"Gay Men's Health Crisis applauds the Kaiser Family Foundation and Viacom for their groundbreaking efforts to promote HIV prevention, accessible health care for all, and global support for the ever-widening fight against AIDS. We especially value the power and influence that such a media initiative will unleash, so that as we proceed in the third decade of the epidemic, we are forceful in fighting complacency and expanding our effectiveness, and conveying the determined message that through action there is hope," said **Ana Oliveira, Executive Director, Gay Men's Health Crisis**.

Sandra L. Thurman, President of the International AIDS Trust said, "If we intend to win the global fight against AIDS, we need to gin up our response so that it matches the magnitude of the crisis. That means enlisting powerful allies with unique assets. Viacom reaches into the hearts, minds, and homes of people across this country and around the world. Their commitment to use their vast resources to educate and empower young people, and all of us, in the fight against AIDS will save countless lives. I applaud the leadership at Viacom for seizing this opportunity to change the course of history and our friends at the Kaiser Family Foundation for creating this model partnership."

"People are dying and the world needs to know," said **Phill Wilson, Executive Director, African American AIDS Policy and Training Institute**. "This new Viacom/Kaiser Initiative provides an unprecedented opportunity to reach important communities with information that will save lives. For those at risk for HIV/AIDS, they'll learn that the danger of AIDS is far from past; for policymakers, that leadership and resources are needed now more than ever; and for voters, that they must demand an end to this global catastrophe. Viacom is particularly positioned to reach African Americans who are disproportionately impacted by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. With cable television, network television, radio, movies, theme parks and billboards, Viacom can reach African Americans in ways that are not available to any other media organization.

Joe Cristina, Founder and Board Chair, Children Affected by AIDS Foundation (CAAF), said, "The Viacom companies, particularly Nickelodeon, have given CAAF their untiring support since our inception in 1993, helping us to help children infected with HIV and affected by AIDS. We applaud the Viacom companies for once again being in the forefront of HIV prevention through the launch of their new Public Awareness Campaign."

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