

**January 18, 2013**

**The Honorable Barbara Boxer**  
**U.S. Senate**

**The Honorable Lois Capps**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**

**The Honorable Tom Coburn**  
**U.S. Senate**

**RE: Endorsement of legislation to address donation of organs from HIV-infected donors to benefit HIV-infected recipients**

Dear Senators Boxer, Coburn and Representative Capps:

Please accept this letter on behalf of the undersigned organizations in strong support of legislation to amend the Public Health Service (PHS) Act to establish safeguards and standards of quality for research and transplantation of organs from HIV-infected donors. We applaud your efforts in sponsoring this legislation, which makes common-sense reforms to a medically outdated federal ban on the use of organs from HIV-infected donors to benefit HIV-infected recipients.

This legislation is the product of a two-year process that included gaining support of more than 40 national organizations including professional HIV/AIDS and organ transplantation societies, patient advocacy groups, and general medical groups. By updating the PHS Act to reflect the current medical understanding of HIV/AIDS, this legislation will increase access to organ transplantation for HIV-infected patients, reduce deaths on the organ transplant waiting list, save taxpayers money, and maintain provisions to protect the national supply of organs.

As you are well aware, due to remarkable advances in HIV treatment and care over the past two decades, many HIV-infected people with access to healthcare have normal life expectancies. However, even when well-controlled with medication, the virus puts people at higher risk for organ failure, and after the onset of organ failure, HIV-infected people require organ transplants sooner than uninfected people with organ failure. In many parts of the country, organ transplant waiting times exceed seven years. Long waiting times disproportionately impact HIV-infected people who simply cannot afford to wait seven years for an organ offer. As a consequence, many people die while waiting. This legislation will increase the availability of an estimated 500 high quality organs each year for HIV-infected patients, which would have otherwise been discarded, providing a unique treatment option to save lives and reduce suffering.

Commonly accepted standards in medicine require that procedures undergo robust study before being accepted as the standard of care. Though preliminary evidence from South Africa demonstrates that transplantation between HIV-infected people is safe and effective, it is incumbent upon the medical community in the United States to carefully study the safety and outcomes of these transplants in the same way that transplantation of HIV-infected recipients with uninfected donor organs has been carefully studied. This legislation will enable such studies, and we must continue to encourage the NIH to continue to fund clinical and comparative-effectiveness research in this area.

Thank you again for your leadership and we look forward to helping you build broad bipartisan support for this legislation in the House of Representatives and Senate, and working with you to see that it is enacted.

If you have any questions or require anything additional from our groups, please do not hesitate to contact our organizations through Brian Boyarsky (brian.boyarsky@jhmi.edu or 410-871-8252).

AIDS Community Research Initiative of America  
AIDS Foundation of Chicago  
AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania (PA)  
AIDS Project Los Angeles  
AIDS Treatment News  
AIDS United  
American Academy of HIV Medicine  
American Sexual Health Association  
American Society for Nephrology  
American Transplant Foundation  
amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
Association of Organ Procurement Organizations  
Birmingham AIDS Outreach (AL)  
Cascade AIDS Project (OR)  
Center for HIV Law and Policy  
Community Access National Network  
Dialysis Patient Citizens  
Eye Bank Association of America  
Fenway Health/Fenway Institute (MA)  
Gay & Lesbian Medical Association: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality  
Gay Men's Health Crisis  
HealthHIV  
HIV Dental Alliance  
HIV Medicine Association  
Human Rights Campaign  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
Lambda Legal  
Latino Commission on AIDS  
Mendocino County AIDS/Viral Hepatitis Network (CA)  
Moveable Feast  
NATCO, The Organization for Transplant Professionals  
National Minority AIDS Council  
Okaloosa AIDS Support & Informational Services, Inc. (FL)  
RAIN Oklahoma (OK)  
Renal Physicians Association  
San Francisco AIDS Foundation  
The AIDS Institute  
Transplant Recipients International Organization  
Treatment Action Group  
US Positive Women's Network  
VillageCare (NY)  
Warren Clinic for Pediatric Infectious Diseases (OK)