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December 9, 2004

The Honorable David M. Walker
Comptroller General
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

I am writing to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigate funding for AIDS prevention under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Prevention funding under PEPFAR is expected to total approximately $3 billion over five years, with one-third directed by Congress to go to "abstinence-until-marriage" programs. Few specifics are known, however, about how this funding is being spent.

PEPFAR's Fiscal Year 2004 Operational Plan indicated that the funding minimum for abstinence education was being met in all PEPFAR target countries, and in many of those countries, abstinence funding far exceeded one-third of prevention spending.[1] The Operational Plan, however, did not provide details about the grantees receiving abstinence-until-marriage funding or the activities that are being funded. The Plan also did not provide details about resources being allocated to other prevention activities such as condom procurement and distribution.

I therefore request that GAO review:

- The activities funded by PEPFAR prevention grants: Please describe the nature and distribution of activities funded for prevention, including abstinence-until-marriage programs and condom procurement. Where possible, please provide quantitative estimates of the amount of funds and resources being allocated in each country for each activity.

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[1] Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, *Fiscal Year 2004 Operational Plan* (May 2004).

- The grantees receiving funding for AIDS prevention: Please determine the number of PEPFAR grantees with experience in HIV prevention, the number who have previously received federal funding, the number with experience in developing countries, and the number with experience in the target country.

- The quality of prevention materials: A report released on December 1, 2004, by the Committee on Government Reform minority staff found frequent and serious inaccuracies in domestic abstinence education programs.[2] Please determine whether materials provided through PEPFAR prevention funding are adequately reviewed by qualified, independent scientists. Please also assess whether there are major inaccuracies in these materials similar to those identified in domestic materials.

- The appropriateness of prevention activities: Please assess whether there are adequate procedures to ensure that PEPFAR funded materials and activities are culturally appropriate. In some areas, for instance, young girls may be forced into marriage and be at high risk for contracting HIV from their husbands. In such situations, abstinence-until-marriage programs could be inappropriate and ineffective at addressing a major source of HIV infection.

In addressing these issues, I request that GAO contact leading public health officials in PEPFAR target countries for their views about the strengths and drawbacks of PEPFAR prevention funding for activities and resources to date.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member

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[2] Committee on Government Reform Minority Staff, *The Content of Federally Funded Abstinence Education Programs* (Dec. 3, 2004) (online at http://democrats.reform.house.gov/Documents/20041201102153-50247.pdf).