



Press Release

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CONTACTS: Cameron Kinker
(914) 960-0464

Murray Penner
(240) 461-0107

U=U MOVEMENT MARKS THREE-YEAR MILESTONE WITH UNPRECEDENTED COMMUNITY-LED GLOBAL IMPACT

***On Eve of 10th IAS Conference on HIV Science, Leaders of Movement Call for New
Commitments to Combat HIV-Related Stigma, Improve the Lives of People with HIV and
End the Epidemic***

New York, NY – July 21, 2019 – Today Prevention Access Campaign (PAC) announced 886 organizations from nearly 100 countries have joined the rapidly growing Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U) movement. The initiative advocates for the worldwide dissemination of the groundbreaking but still widely unknown fact: a person living with HIV who is on treatment and has an undetectable viral load cannot sexually transmit HIV. U=U as a prevention method is unequivocally verified by numerous studies and recently estimated as 100% effective by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

To build on progress made since PAC launched the campaign in July 2016, today PAC called on multi-sector global stakeholders to make new commitments. These include increasing the reach and availability of public health information on U=U, especially aimed at engaging communities disproportionately affected by HIV; integrating U=U into grantmaking priorities; leveraging U=U as a public health argument in advocacy for universal access to treatment and services; and government leaders to take action to ensure U=U is clearly communicated and incorporated into national HIV programs, such as the President's Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative in the United States.

A diverse community reflecting every key affected population has driven the explosive growth of the U=U campaign over the past three years. Passionate advocates have shaped the field by moving NGOs, research institutions and health ministries to sign on to the campaign and update their assessments of HIV transmission risk. As a result, organizations and governmental agencies in 98 countries such as Brazil, Canada, China, France, Guatemala, Japan, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Uganda and Vietnam are now propagating the life-changing U=U message. A full list of signatories can be found at www.preventionaccess.org/consensus.

"The scale and impact of the U=U community of activists is unprecedented for any global public health and human rights movement," said Bruce Richman, founder of Prevention Access Campaign. "When we launched U=U, most international health bodies and advocacy organizations were not ready to publicly acknowledge it. Some persistently and aggressively fought us. Over the course of the past three years that has changed, reminding us of what is possible when passionate people join together to demand accurate and meaningful information about our social, sexual and reproductive health."

The campaign officially kicked off when PAC's Consensus Statement, which affirms and declares the U=U evidence, was unveiled in July 2016. Significant milestones have since contributed toward its global acceptance. A month after the launch, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene joined the campaign, becoming the first public health body to do so. Concurrently, Terrence Higgins Trust, the largest HIV/AIDS charity in the United Kingdom, initiated a nationwide effort to ensure the U=U

science was at the core of its HIV response. As the campaign momentum grew, so did the roster of prominent organizations, medical leaders and health ministries supporting the message.

In Sept. 2017, Dr. Anthony S. Fauci declared at the United States Conference on AIDS “the science really does verify and validate U=U.” A few weeks later, after a year of discussions between government health agencies and the community, led by PAC, CDC issued a Dear Colleague Letter aligned with the campaign. Soon thereafter, *The Lancet* published an editorial calling U=U “a simple but hugely important campaign,” and “the most important HIV prevention message of 2017.” And in May 2019, the PARTNER2 study was published in *The Lancet* adding further support to the campaign, stating “the results from the PARTNER studies support wider dissemination of the message of the U=U campaign that risk of transmission of HIV in the context of virally suppressive ART is zero.”

“Since the onset of the AIDS crisis, our scientific understanding of HIV has grown exponentially,” said Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, Deputy Commissioner for the New York City Department’s Division of Disease Control who first signed the U=U Consensus Statement in 2016. “This has led to remarkable advances in the efficacy and tolerability of antiretroviral treatment, as well as in approaches to how we perceive, define and communicate risk of HIV transmission. Our expectation should be that everyone believes, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that U=U is true. We must now turn our attention from defending the science behind U=U to spreading it as the new gospel of HIV treatment and prevention.”

HIV-related stigma undermines HIV testing and prevention efforts, along with HIV treatment uptake, adherence and engagement in care. Increasing knowledge about U=U is an effective global response to this public health challenge by helping address its many devastating affects including discrimination, wrongful legal prosecution, mental health issues, social rejection and violence. U=U is a compelling argument for expanded access to treatment and services, and provides an added incentive for people with HIV to initiate treatment and engage in care.

“The U=U movement has made a profound impact on me and countless other people living with HIV,” said Lucy Wanjiku Njenga, Executive Coordinator, Positive Young Women Voices in Nairobi, Kenya. “The rapid embrace of U=U over the past three years has helped win over skeptics, changing lives and preventing new transmissions in the process. But our work is far from over. Misinformation and stigma are still prevalent in nearly every corner of the world, which requires an urgent response.”

About Prevention Access Campaign

Prevention Access Campaign is a health equity initiative to end the dual epidemics of HIV and HIV-related stigma by empowering people with and vulnerable to HIV with accurate and meaningful information about their social, sexual and reproductive health.

Prevention Access Campaign's **Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U)** is a growing global community of HIV advocates, activists, researchers uniting to clarify and disseminate the revolutionary but largely unknown fact that *people living with HIV on effective treatment do not sexually transmit HIV*.

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