

Sample Letters to the Editor

Example #1:

Dear Editor,

[Reporter's Name]'s article, [Name of Article], of [Date of Article] was entirely misleading on the role family planning can play in preventing HIV transmission. HIV positive women, like HIV negative women, desire contraceptives in order to plan and space the timing of their pregnancies. Providing access to contraception to help women avoid having unintended pregnancies can prevent significantly more mother-to-child transmission of HIV than providing the drug nivarapine at delivery. And preventing unintended pregnancy prevents abortion. [Reporter's Name] calls this "aggressive family planning." I call it sound public health. While PEPFAR has had a tremendous impact in extending treatment to HIV positive people, preventing infection in the first place is lagging in the fight against AIDS. UNAIDS and others estimate that six individuals become infected for every one HIV positive person starting on antiretroviral therapy. This signals that we need to be promoting every possible prevention intervention. Family planning, through access to contraception, is a cost-effective intervention in the fight against AIDS. Shamelessly dismissing family planning under the guise of opposing abortion is not at all helping the women, men and families of Africa and other countries served through PEPFAR.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Your Address
Your Email
Your Phone

Example #2:

Dear Editor:

As the world examines the achievements and challenges towards eradicating HIV/AIDS on this World AIDS Day, we must take a critical look at the conflicting realities making women and girls vulnerable to the perpetual face of HIV/AIDS. Access to treatment is extending the lives of HIV-positive people in remarkable ways, and yet unwanted pregnancy among HIV-positive women is on the rise. While incidents of HIV are declining in some African regions, women continue to become infected through sexual transmission at alarmingly high rates. Unless steps are taken to address their HIV/AIDS *and* sexual and reproductive health needs, women and girls will remain the unwilling victims of this deadly epidemic.

Contrary to what some may think, marriage poses significant risk of HIV infection for women in many parts of the world. In fact, more than eighty percent of new HIV infections in women occur in marriage or in long-term relationships. Despite global recognition of the unique

vulnerabilities of women and girls to HIV infection, U.S. HIV prevention policy continues to emphasize abstinence education ahead of tools, like condom use, that would better safe-guard women's health. Tragically, it also has all but abandoned its 40 year leadership of support for international family planning. The vast amount of funding for HIV/AIDS prevention are rarely, if ever, integrated with family planning and reproductive health programs that provide desperately needed services to women and their families.

Only through financial and political support for the integration of HIV/AIDS and family planning services do we give women and girls a true chance at survival. That would be something to celebrate.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Address

Your Email

Your Phone