



AHF: Business as Usual at the IAS Conference, While 1 million Still Die of AIDS Every Year

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PARIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)--The latest data presented at the [9th IAS Conference on HIV Science](#) in Paris suggest that the AIDS crisis is on track to be over by 2020, but many persistent problems with access to treatment and prevention in hard-hit countries seem to contradict this optimistic outlook.

"We are concerned that leaders are leaving the IAS Conference with a sense that the situation is better than it really is, but politics should not be playing into epidemiology," said **Dr. Michael Wohlfeiler**, [AHF](#) Chief of Medicine, who attended the conference. "What we need is a reality check – UNAIDS just announced that in 2016, 19.5 million people were on antiretroviral treatment. We want a verification – to us it still looks very much like a burning crisis. The problem is that when you diminish the scale of the crisis, you diminish the sense of urgency and the funding that is needed to address it."

The latest number of people on antiretroviral treatment for 2016, as [reported by UNAIDS](#), represents a 2.5 million increase from 2015. UNAIDS representatives acknowledged that these numbers are estimates, but they nonetheless expressed strong confidence in their accuracy.

During a Q&A session, AHF's Global Public Health Ambassador **Dr. Jorge Saavedra** pointed out to UNAIDS Executive Director Michele Sidibe that in absolute terms 90-90-90 goals are 90-81-73, since each percentage goal is based on a proportion of the preceding goal. Thus, current progress toward 90-90-90 is lower than what is perceived based on UNAIDS methodology.

"I asked Michele Sidibe not to present the global achievements so far on 90-90-90 as 70-77-82, because it sends the message that irrespective of decreasing funding we are getting significant gains and we are already nearly there," said Dr. Saavedra. "If you show that the actual figures are 70-54-44 globally, it immediately sends the message that we are still far from the targets and extra resources, and extra effort is needed."

Clinicians and program implementers see the daily reality of fighting the epidemic, particular in resource constrained settings. **Dr. Lydia Buzaalirwa**, Director of Quality Management at AHF Uganda Cares who attended the conference said there's still a lot of work left to do.

"At the conference there is agreement about differentiated models of care – but the journey is just beginning, because, for example, across Africa many key populations are highly stigmatized, particularly within the health care systems, and NGOs who work with these groups almost have to do it undercover," Dr. Buzaalirwa said. "Also, for adolescents and children, there is a lot of focus, but treatment outcomes are still poor – adherence and mortality are a problem. Some things are improving, but financing will remain a big hurdle for the AIDS response – it will affect access, logistics, human resources and many other aspects of care. People are dying undiagnosed and untreated. We need to speed up our response now!"

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), the largest global AIDS organization, currently provides medical care and/or services to over 774,000 individuals in 39 countries worldwide in the US, Africa, Latin America/Caribbean, the Asia/Pacific Region and Eastern Europe. To learn more about AHF, please visit our website: www.aidshealth.org, find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/aidshealth and follow us [@aidshealthcare](https://twitter.com/aidshealthcare).

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