



Kaiser Daily HIV/AIDS Report

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Politics and Policy

AIDS Orphan Advocates Call for Increased Community-Based Programs, Passage of PEPFAR Bill

Advocacy groups on Wednesday during a briefing about the millions of children worldwide who have lost one or both parents to AIDS called for an increase in community-based programs to assist AIDS orphans, as well as the passage of legislation to reauthorize the [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief](#), [CQ HealthBeat](#) reports (Cooley, [CQ HealthBeat](#), 5/7). The House last month voted to approve a bill ([HR 5501](#)) that would reauthorize PEPFAR at \$50 billion over the next five years, among other measures. The Senate version, which also would allocate \$50 billion over five years, [passed](#) the [Foreign Relations Committee](#) in March and is awaiting floor consideration ([Kaiser Daily HIV/AIDS Report](#), 4/3).

Speakers at the briefing -- which was hosted by the groups [Global Action for Children](#) and [Francois-Xavier Bagnoud](#) -- said that community-based efforts in addition to increases in PEPFAR funding are necessary to address HIV/AIDS. FXB Founder Albina du Boisrouvray said that local initiatives are needed to prevent children from "drifting" into commercial sex work or becoming child soldiers, which she called "ills that we spend so many billions fighting downstream instead of preventing upstream."

Jim Yong Kim -- a professor of health, human rights and medicine at [Harvard University](#) -- said, "We have to take a hard look at how we're spending our money." He and other speakers called for family-centered approaches to addressing AIDS orphans, adding that institutional care often is associated with poor outcomes. "Your average American, when thinking of the orphan crisis, thinks either of adoption or orphanages," advocate Diana Aubourg Millner said. She and Kim said that they support programs that encourage family members and communities to care for orphans.

Kim also said that money should be given directly to communities instead of large international and often faith-based groups. He said that cash transfers given directly to impoverished families have increased school enrollment and attendance in Honduras, Mexico, South Africa and Zambia. In addition, Kim emphasized the role of PEPFAR funding in supporting and expanding such initiatives. "Nothing has made me prouder of being an American than watching what PEPFAR has done," he said ([CQ HealthBeat](#), 5/7).