

Six experts resign from Trump HIV/AIDS panel

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Six top health advisors have resigned from Donald Trump's advisory council on HIV/AIDS, complaining that the US president doesn't really care about combatting the illness.

In a letter published Friday in Newsweek, Scott Schoettes said the Trump administration has "no strategy" on AIDS and that he and his five colleagues will be more effective advocating for change from the outside.

Schoettes, counsel and HIV project director at Lambda Legal, resigned Tuesday from the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, along with Lucy Bradley-Springer, Gina Brown, Ulysses Burley III, Michelle Ogle and Grissel Granados.

The council can have up to 25 members.

"The Trump administration has no strategy to address the on-going HIV/AIDS epidemic, seeks zero input from experts to formulate HIV policy, and—most concerning—pushes legislation that will harm people living with HIV and halt or reverse important gains made in the fight against this disease," Schoettes wrote.

"If we do not ensure that US leadership at the executive and legislative levels are informed by experience and expertise, real people will be hurt and some will even die," he said.

"Because we do not believe the Trump administration is listening to—or cares—about the communities we serve as members of PACHA, we have decided it is time to step down."

PACHA, which was created in 1995, includes [public health officials](#), researchers, [health care providers](#), faith leavers, HIV advocates and people living with HIV. Its helps inform the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, which was last revised in 2015.

Schoettes noted that Trump failed to appoint a head of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy, a senior advisory position, and took down the Office of National AIDS Policy website the very day he took office—on January 20—and has yet to replace it.

He also stressed that changes Trump and his fellow Republicans in Congress are seeking to the sweeping [health](#) care reform initiated by former president Barack Obama would be "extremely harmful" to people living with HIV or AIDS.

Schoettes cited data showing that only 40 percent of people living with HIV in the United States can access life-saving medications.

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