

April 3, 2020

Dear Friends, Colleagues and Members,

First and foremost, I hope this message finds you safe and healthy, each and every one of you, despite all of the surrounding crazy and stress. These past few weeks have been filled with fear and uncertainty due to the COVID-19 virus. Doors closing, services and accessibility limited, provisions more and more difficult to find, and it feels like we have lost control over every aspect of our lives.

We've been through hard times before, and I believe if there was a single positive outcome of the AIDS pandemic — the decades of protest, activism and lives lost — it is the creation of UNAIDS in 1996. UNAIDS is the first-ever and only United Nations entity with civil society represented on its governing body. Representation of that magnitude is a big deal. Without UNAIDS, there would be no strategic, unified vision for the AIDS (or COVID-19) pandemic response, and there would be no plan to end the HIV epidemic in the US. On the home stretch of Ending the HIV Epidemic, I hope that the COVID-19 pandemic furthers us in a direction of rebuilding an even better healthcare infrastructure, one that provides more adequate and accurate health education, and testing and treatment for everyone; the best health outcome is a healthy and more resilient society.

For now, I encourage everyone, especially seniors and those with compromised immune systems, to stay at home and be as safe and healthy as possible. BSR staff is rolling with the punches and working tirelessly to guide us through this. For now, all meetings this month are being cancelled and staff will keep continue to work the Chairs of each committee via email. If you have any questions, concerns, or need services or assistance, do not hesitate to check the Partnership website [www.aidsnet.org](http://www.aidsnet.org) (updated daily) or reach out to the BSR staff directly.

I pray that as many people as possible can work from home or have jobs that are still going. Being separated from family and those we love is probably the most difficult, so use FaceTime or video chat on WhatsApp and keep those connections going. Let's face the challenge and create new opportunities; fill your days with some exercise or Spring cleaning, take an online course or stream a Broadway show; spend some time with nature — count your blessings and rest!

I miss our meetings. The work we do — helping others find security and get into care — will happen; and we will do it together, when it's time. We're going to get through this and make some changes; right now, priority #1 is you, so please stay safe and stay healthy.

All the Best,

*Travis Neff*

Travis Neff  
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