

# Medicine Shortages Are an Unseen Consequence of COVID-19

The HIV Medicine Recycling Program urgently needs donations.

September 10, 2020 By AID FOR AIDS

---

HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, was discovered in 1983. Today, there are more than 38 million people worldwide living with the virus and more than 40% of them still lack access to treatment.

Since 1996, [AID FOR AIDS \(AFA\)](#) has been pioneering an essential program that collects surplus HIV medication in the United States to recycle and redistribute it to people who would not have access to it in non-U.S. territories as humanitarian aid.

The HIV Medicine Recycling Program was AFA's first program. For the past 24 years, it has been providing much-needed life-saving drugs to more than 20,000 people in 59 countries. Today, it is the largest HIV medicine redistribution program in the United States, having collected and redistributed nearly \$160 million worth of medicines.

COVID-19 has changed the world, and its impact on AFA is no exception. The HIV Medicine Recycling Program has been deeply affected as the locations where we have drug delivery boxes and shipping services were included in temporary closures to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus.

A 60% to 80% reduction in donations has been seen due to COVID-19, compromising the continuity of treatment for more than 1,000 people who currently rely on AFA as their primary source of access to HIV treatment.

AFA gathers, sorts, discards and stores unused unexpired medicines including:

- Antiretrovirals: protease inhibitors (PIs), nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs), non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs), entry inhibitors and integrase inhibitors.
- Any other medicines that may benefit people living with HIV including antifungals/ antimycotics,

antibiotics, treatments for respiratory conditions, diabetes, elevated cholesterol, hepatitis C and other comorbidities.

If you're interested in donating your surplus medication:

1. You can send your unexpired medication to our headquarters at: 131 Varick Street, Suite 1006, New York, New York 10013. If you are unable to cover the shipping expenses, please email us at [lkli@aidforaids.org](mailto:lkli@aidforaids.org) so we can provide you with a prepaid shipping label.
2. AFA accepts all unexpired antiretroviral medicine, as well as all medicine that may be useful to manage co-morbid conditions in people living with HIV. AFA will accept bottles that have been opened as long as the medicine is still unexpired. AFA accepts sealed containers of liquid and powder medications, and both sealed and unsealed containers of pills.
3. Please remove the names and addresses of all individuals from prescription bottles in order for us to comply with privacy and confidentiality laws. Always leave the name of the medicine and expiration date visible.
4. Please place all pill bottles in a sealable plastic bag and place this bag inside a padded envelope or cardboard box. All pill bottles should be securely closed. Please: do not send any loose capsules or tablets inside a plastic bag or box!
5. Please fill out the [donor card](#), print it and place the card inside the envelope or box. If you would like to keep your donation anonymous, please still fill out the other information requested, which enables us to track donations and monitor trends.

Your recycled medication can become a lifeline for someone else. From donations to sharing information, any form of help can save many lives!