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Community Access National Network Issues Statement on World AIDS Day

U=U must be at the center of the Ending the Epidemic

WASHINGTON, DC (December 1, 2022) – The Community Access National Network, otherwise known as CANN, President & CEO, Jen Laws, today issued the following statement to commemorate World AIDS Day 2022:

“On this World AIDS Day, we honor the souls lost to the AIDS pandemic and those lives still fighting to End the HIV Epidemic, including people living with HIV/AIDS, advocates, activists, policymakers, industry partners, and all our loved ones in this fight with us. This year's World AIDS Day theme, *Equalize*, lifts the necessity to address disparities in access to care and treatment. It requires us to assess how structural and institutional biases, government policy, and social stigma operate as barriers to care across the Global South and in the United States' Southern region. While biomedical advancements have transformed HIV from an unidentified, terminal illness to a chronic, relatively easy to manage illness, on average, one person dies of an AIDS-related illness every minute of every day somewhere in the world. Even more struggle to remain in care due to barriers beyond their control; be it transportation, trust in providers, affordability based on the design of their insurance, willingness of employers to give paid sick time, lack of food or housing necessary to take and store medications, laws criminalizing HIV as a health status, or any other barrier to care. While PrEP is an astounding advancement, and nationalized programs are needed to ensure access to PrEP for communities highly affected by HIV, efforts to End the HIV Epidemic cannot supplant treating people already living with HIV/AIDS for PrEP. Treating people living with HIV/AIDS, ensuring access to care is realized equitably, is as effective as a method of preventing new diagnoses *AND* meets our ethical obligation to care for those in need. Undetectable equals untransmittable cannot be realized broadly when the basic, life-sustaining resources of housing and food are out of reach for so many. In order to fulfill our obligation to the memories of those we've lost along the way, we must fight for the lives of people still with us.”

For general information, please contact CANN at info@tiicann.org.

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***About the Community Access National Network:** The mission of the Community Access National Network (CANN) is to define, promote, and improve access to healthcare services and supports for people living with HIV/AIDS and/or Viral Hepatitis through advocacy, education, and networking. These services must be affordable to the people who need them regardless of insurance status, income, or geographic location.*