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Ending AIDS in Children Must Be a Global Priority

*Statement from the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
ahead of the 20th International AIDS Conference*

Washington, D.C.—July 17, 2014—As the global HIV/AIDS community gathers for the 20th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014) in Melbourne, Australia, the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) urges conference delegates, policy makers, non-governmental organizations, and ministries of health around the world to prioritize children who are living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

“We know how to end AIDS in children now,” said Charles Lyons, EGPAF president and CEO. “We are on the cusp of eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV globally. EGPAF is helping mothers, clinics, and nations end the threat of AIDS to children worldwide. To date, we have reached 20 million women with services to prevent them from passing HIV on to their babies, and we will continue our work until no child has AIDS.”

In its [new global report](#), UNAIDS is calling for accelerated scale-up of HIV treatment and prevention efforts in order to end the epidemic by 2030. Ensuring that children are a part of this scale-up will be essential to achieving this goal.

However, many children and families around the world still lack access to the services needed to end this epidemic. Each day, almost 700 children become newly infected with HIV, more than 90 percent of whom contract the virus from their mothers during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding. And only one-quarter of children living with HIV have access to treatment. We need to identify and treat HIV-positive children as early as possible because without treatment, nearly half of these children will die before their second birthday and 80 percent will die before age 5. We can change this, but we can't do it alone. EGPAF is working hand-in-hand with governments, partners, mothers, families, and donors toward a health and social infrastructure that can end pediatric AIDS.

Children living with HIV continue to be left behind when it comes to advances in medical research and access to lifesaving medicines. They can't be treated as miniature adults—they require medicines, care, and support that are age-appropriate and effective for their specific needs.

EGPAF began as an organization that identified and funded much-needed research into pediatric AIDS, and the research we do today continues to change the future for children, their families, and their countries. Momentum to create new pediatric diagnostic tools and antiretroviral formulations is growing—innovative treatments such as fixed-dosed combinations tailored for children, better tasting medications, and even medications in powder or sprinkle form are in the pipeline. Because of our work in thousands of health care sites, we are able to evaluate and offer these research innovations to the families that need them by influencing local policy and practices.

EGPAF is a global champion for children—and we look to delegates at the AIDS 2014 conference to join us as we work toward a world where no child has AIDS. Ending pediatric AIDS is not just a dream; together we can make it a reality.

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About the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF):

EGPAF is the global leader in the fight against pediatric HIV/ AIDS and has reached 20 million women with services to prevent transmission of HIV to their babies. It currently supports more than 7,000 health facilities and works in 15 countries to implement prevention, care, and treatment services; to further advance innovative research; and to execute global advocacy activities that bring dramatic change to the lives of millions of women, children, and families worldwide. For more information, visit www.pedaids.org.