Stop the TPP from Putting HIV Treatment Out of Reach!

TPP stands for Trans-Pacific Partnership. It is a giant free trade agreement that is being negotiated by 12 countries that border on the Pacific Ocean, including the US.

The TPP will make it easier for pharmaceutical companies to demand longer patent extensions. By extending their patents, corporations can keep cheaper generic drugs from coming onto the market. Currently, competition between generic and “name-brand” drugs can bring the price of a drug down by anywhere from 30% to 80% of their original cost. About 90% of the drugs taken to treat HIV globally are affordable, generic medicines.

Where are we now?

TPP is the first of three major international treaties being negotiated by trade representatives from various countries. The other two are the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP, with European partners) and the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA, with 50 other countries). The US is a negotiating partner in all three of these.

Each of these treaties is being negotiated secretly. Even our Congress members have not been allowed to see the treaty drafts, which are written by Administration officials and hundreds of “advisors” working for multinational corporations. TPP negotiations started in 2010 and ended on October 5, 2015. The treaty chapter covering drug pricing is now online, thanks to Wikileaks.

Last June, Congress gave President Obama “fast track authority” to move the TPP and other such bills through Congress without any debate. In doing so, they surrendered our right, as citizens and tax-payers, to hear and participate in public debate on this issue. This makes it all the more important that we hold them accountable for how they vote on the TPP. In the next few months, Congress will receive the TPP full text and have 60 days to consider it before voting “yes” or “no”. We must urge our legislators now to vote NO on TPP.

What are we up against?

Passing TPP will ensure that even fewer people living with HIV will have uninterrupted access to the antiretroviral (ARV) drugs they need to stay alive. About 37 million people...
are now living with HIV. About 15 million of them have access to ARVs. Without these drugs (usually generics) people with HIV develop AIDS and die. There is no alternative.

Through PEPFAR, the US government is dedicating over $5.2 billion tax dollars in FY2016 to the goal of ending AIDS. What sense does it make to invest so much in that goal while simultaneously passing the TPP and allowing pharmaceutical corporations to force affordable, generic ARVs off the market both here in the US and abroad?

TPP passage will also raise ARV prices and decrease generic drug access in the US. The AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) and private insurance plans will be stretched even further and the adequacy of their coverage will go down as drugs prices rise and generics become scarce.

So how do we get them to vote no?

1. Sign one or both of these petitions. No need to give your address if you don’t want to.

   These petitions are collective statements from people and organizations opposing the TPP for all kinds of reasons. Driving up HIV/AIDS drug prices is just one of the many negative effects that the TPP will have, if passed, on our health, our country and our climate. By joining with advocates in other sectors and endorsing collective petitions, we send a strong message to Congress about America’s opposition to the TPP.

2. Call your Congressmember and both of your Senators. Ask them to vote “no on the TPP” whenever it comes up. This is really easy. All you have to do is:

   a. Go to http://www.opencongress.org, enter your zip code and get the phone numbers of the Congressmember in your district and your state’s two Senators.

   b. Call. Say you are a constituent in their district/state. Say you want them to vote NO on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Tell them why this matters, if you feel like doing so. Remember, legislators works for us. We pay their salaries.

   c. Go get five other friends, neighbors, relatives, etc. to make these calls also.

3. Endorse and/or join the November 14-18 National Mobilization in Washington DC to Stop TPP, TTIP, and TiSA

4. See Doctors Without Borders webpage on TPP for more ideas.

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1 Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, US, Vietnam