

The Hidden Epidemic – May 15, 2014 Brief in Washington D.C.



The Hidden Epidemic of children with HIV was the focus of today's briefing on Capitol Hill hosted by the Children's AIDS Fund International, UNAIDS, UNICEF, the Institute for Youth Development and the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

Of the 35 million people in the world living with HIV, 3.2 million are children. At least 2 million of them do not have access to the antiretroviral treatment that is essential for their survival. Every day 700 children are newly infected and remain untreated, 50% of infected infants will die before their second birthday, and 80% will die before age 5.

Experts agree that this gap must become a priority for policy makers, pharmaceutical companies, and the general public—these children are being left behind.

Speakers including Ambassador Deborah Birx, the newly appointed U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, cited the great successes that has been achieved over the last decade in treating adults with HIV—including prevention of mother to child transmission. But there is also broad agreement that there is a treatment gap that still exists for children who are infected with HIV. These children, numbering 3.2 million, have been left behind.

While treatment for children is more complex than for adults, all the experts agree that this gap must become a priority for

policy makers, pharmaceutical companies, and the general public in order to prevent the unnecessary deaths of millions of children. These children, if provided with the needed medicine, can live long and healthy lives.

Through the Children's AIDS Fund International you can help bring life-saving treatment to this Hidden Epidemic of Children around the world.