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A WIDER AIDS BATTLE

The Obama administration's farsighted effort to treat millions more infected people abroad is a welcome step.

Important new findings show that very early treatment of people infected with H.I.V. enhances their health and greatly lessens the likelihood that they will spread the virus that causes AIDS. We welcome the Obama administration's announcement of a farsighted effort to treat millions more infected people abroad, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

The administration expects that the expanded treatments can be paid for with existing resources, by pushing for greater efficiencies and more financing from recipient nations. But if that effort stalls, the administration should re-evaluate quickly whether to ask Congress for money.

On the international front, President Obama set a goal to provide drug therapy to six million infected people by the end of 2013, up from less than four million currently. That goal would include boosting the number of infected pregnant women given drugs to prevent transmission to their newborns to 1.5 million, up from 600,000 today.

Progress in preventing new infections has stagnated abroad and in the United States, so the push to expand treatments, along with other proven prevention programs like condom distribution, is clearly needed.

Mr. Obama also announced that he would commit an additional \$50 million in the United States in fiscal year 2012 to help pay for treatments at AIDS clinics and in-state programs that provide AIDS drugs to people who can't afford them.

An estimated 1.2 million Americans were infected with the virus at latest count, of whom 240,000 people are unaware.

The investments here and abroad should pay off in the long run by reducing the number of people infected and easing the severity of illnesses.