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## US to end travel ban on HIV patients

**WASHINGTON:** President Barack Obama said the United States would end in early 2010 a 22-year-old travel ban on foreign HIV patients, hailing the move as a step towards ending the stigma of the disease.

Obama announced the move as he signed the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act, a Bill funding a federal programme providing HIV-related health care.

"It will also take an effort to end the stigma that has stopped people from getting tested, that has stopped people from facing their own illness and that has sped the spread of this disease for far too long," Obama said at the signing ceremony yesterday.

"If we want to be the global leader in combating HIV/AIDS, we need to act like it. And that's why on Monday, my administration will publish a final rule that eliminates the travel ban effective just after the New Year." — AFP