

Millions of HIV and Cancer Funds Diverted to Detain Immigrant Children

Up to \$266 million to be moved from a number of health programs. Here's how you can help stop it.

September 20, 2018 By [Trent Straube](#)

In order to cover the costs of housing thousands of undocumented immigrant children, the Trump Administration plans to reallocate as much as \$266 million from numerous programs, including those for cancer research and HIV prevention and treatment, [Yahoo News reports](#).

The plan was detailed in a letter from Alex Azar, who heads the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Specifically, about \$16.7 million will come from Head Start, which provides child development aid to low-income families; \$13.3 million from the National Cancer Institute; and \$5.7 million from the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program. About \$80 million will be diverted from other refugee programs.

Tell Congress that there is zero tolerance for using federal [#HIV](#) funds to [#detain](#) immigrant children by filling out our action alert! <https://t.co/bcfyOEf5FU>
pic.twitter.com/0rtxmTaUL5

— AIDS United (@AIDS_United) [September 20, 2018](#)

In response to this reports, AIDS United, a national policy and advocacy group, issued a [statement and a call to action](#). What's more, AIDS United reported that of the \$266 million being reallocated is "more than \$9.5 million in federal HIV spending from the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, CDC HIV prevention and surveillance, the Secretary's Minority AIDS Initiative Fund, and other programs."

AIDS United continues: “Any removal of federal HIV funding for purposes not related to caring for the 1.2 million people living with HIV in this country is unacceptable, but taking away federal HIV funding in order to detain immigrant children after separating them from their families at the border is appalling and cannot be tolerated.

“We call on everyone in the HIV community to speak out and demand that the Trump administration keep their hands off federal HIV funding and to end their inhumane policy of child separation.”

The AIDS United call to action includes a form you can fill out, which then sets up a pre-written letter that will go to your U.S. senators and representative. You have the option to personalize the message.

Meanwhile, back to specifics from the original Yahoo News reporting. The diverted money will be reallocated to the Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC) program in the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), and it will come from current fiscal year funding, which ends September 30.

Yahoo News reports that, as of September 19, there were 13,312 immigrant children in custody and that the federal facilities to house the children are already 92 percent full.

Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said that he supports getting funds to ORR but that he questions whether the need for more money is because of an influx of more immigrant children or because of the Trump administration’s family separation policy.

Mark Greenberg, a former HHS official who specializes in migration policy issues, told Yahoo News, “This is not a story about a historically large surge in arrivals. The story is fundamentally about a significant slowdown in children being released from care.”

Earlier this summer, a similar story broke. For more, read [“Trump Agency Is Using Federal HIV Funds to Separate Immigrant Families.”](#)