



## Rahm Emanuel's AFC Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire December 2010

*\*indicates Rahm disagreed with AFC*

**1. Do you support maintaining current City corporate funding of \$4.6 million for community-based HIV prevention services, HIV prevention supplies, and awareness as a strategy to address the escalating HIV/AIDS crisis in our city?**

RAHM EMANUEL: Yes.

**\*2. Every day, 5% of people who enter Chicago Department of Public Health's STD clinics for STD treatment are sent home because of inadequate clinic capacity. Do you support increased funding to reduce turn-away rates?**

*AFC Answer: YES-* Public health clinics provide vital sexually transmitted disease (STD) and HIV prevention and testing services to at-risk individuals across the city. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2009 Chicago ranked first in the nation among cities and counties with the highest number of gonorrhea cases, and second highest number of Chlamydia cases and syphilis cases. Since STDs increase the likelihood of HIV transmission, effective STD screening and treatment programs are a critical aspect of a comprehensive HIV prevention plan.

RAHM EMANUEL: Addressing HIV/AIDS and STD education and prevention is a priority. I am committed to maintaining funding levels for current programs, **but any increase may depend on developing alternate public and private resources or achieving savings through consolidation and efficiencies within all healthcare budget categories.** The City budget currently operates at a \$600 million deficit and we cannot talk about new spending programs before we get our fiscal house in order.

**\*3. Do you support Chicago increasing funding for needle exchange programs, which effectively decrease transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C among injection drug users, their sexual partners, and children?**

*AFC Answer: YES-* Empirical research shows that community access to sterile injection equipment greatly reduces the transmission of HIV, hepatitis, and other blood-borne infections without increasing drug use. Thanks to the state's progressive harm reduction policies, new HIV diagnoses among injection drug users have declined by two-thirds (according to data from the Illinois Department of Public Health), but state budget cuts and delayed payments to providers make local funding for these programs more important than ever.

RAHM EMANUEL: As noted in question 2, I support maintaining current funding levels and will look to other public and private resources or efficiencies to increase funding for needle exchange programs.

**4. Do you support Chicago Public Schools offering voluntary, confidential school-based STD and HIV screening and treatment at every high school, at least annually?**

RAHM EMANUEL: Yes.

**5. Do you support a city-wide, coordinated campaign to promote the utilization of male and female condoms and make them available for free in an expanded number of locations?**

RAHM EMANUEL: This is a valid idea. I would propose that the Mayor's office work together with the AIDS Foundation and each alderman to tailor a solution that is appropriate for each ward.

**6. Do you support a city-wide, coordinated media campaign to combat homophobia and HIV stigma and encourage HIV testing?**

RAHM EMANUEL: Yes.

**7. Evidence suggests that few employers are willing to hire transgender individuals, leaving them with few options but sex work and resulting in high rates of HIV and other STDs among this population. Do you support designating city and/or federal funding for cultural competency training of employers and expansion of job training and opportunities for transgender individuals?**

RAHM EMANUEL: Yes. Transgender people experience some of the most extreme and pervasive problems of any group within the LGBT community. I will work with the community to educate the public about trans-phobia and help build a better life for transgender people in employment, education, public health, public accommodations and housing.

**8. Do you support continued city corporate funding for the Chicago Department of Public Health Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Health?**

RAHM EMANUEL: Yes.

**9. Do you support continued City corporate funding for the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus to raise awareness of HIV among African American gay men, who have the highest rates of HIV in Chicago?**

RAHM EMANUEL: Yes.

**10. Housing is a critical supportive service for low-income people with HIV. Do you support maintaining the current 80 Low Income Housing Trust Fund units that are set aside for people with HIV, and restoring \$175,000 that was cut in 2009 from City corporate funding for housing for people with HIV?**

RAHM EMANUEL: Yes. I will require that city agencies work closely with service providers to ensure that our neediest citizens are cared for and put on a path to stable housing, and I will work to increase the stock of shelters and affordable housing units and make sure that housing is welcoming and available to people with HIV. A well-rounded strategy will also require sensitivity training so that HIV positive individuals are treated with dignity and fairness.