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CDC Director Robert Redfield Has A Long History With Anti-LGBTQ Groups And Advocating For Discriminatory Policies Detrimental To HIV-Positive Americans

CDC Director Robert Redfield Spoke Out In Support Of Trump's Plan To Eradicate HIV...

February 2019: CDC Director Redfield Said That “We Need To Diagnose [HIV] Early And Rapidly” To Get People Access To Treatment Including PrEP. “Trump used the State of the Union address Tuesday night to outline a goal of ending the HIV epidemic in the United States. The plan targets 48 counties that have been designated transmission hot spots. Federal agencies including the CDC, NIH, the Health Resources and Services Administration and Indian Health Service will be involved and partner with local health agencies. ‘We need to diagnose early and rapidly and ensure people get access to comprehensive treatment, including PrEP,’ CDC Director Robert Redfield said, referring to pre-exposure prophylaxis, or having high-risk individuals take HIV medicines to lower their chances of getting infected. ‘We’re going to have boots on the ground to help ensure this key progress is made.’ The commitment for new funding represents a dramatic shift for the administration, which in previous budget requests proposed major cuts to domestic and international HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention programs.” [PULSE, 2/6/19]

...But His Close Ties To Anti-LGBTQ, Abstinence-Only Groups Cast Doubt On His Intentions

Redfield Has Had A Decades-Long Close Relationship With The Controversial Children’s AIDS Fund (CAF), Which Used To Be Known As Americans For A Sound AIDS/HIV Policy (ASAP).

Redfield Has Had A “Close Relationship” With The Children’s AIDS Fund, Which Has “Championed Abstinence-Only Education As A Means Of Combating HIV.” “...military investigators chastised Redfield for having a ‘close relationship’ to a nonprofit called Americans for Sound AIDS/HIV Policy (ASAP) ‘to a degree that is inappropriate.’ ASAP, now known as the [Children’s AIDS Fund](#), was founded by evangelical Christians; it has championed abstinence-only education as a method of combating HIV and other approaches grounded more in religious belief than scientific evidence. [The Atlantic, 3/22/18]

- **In 2018, The Atlantic Reported That The Children’s AIDS Fund Still Listed Redfield As A Board Member (The Website No Longer Displays His Name).** “His main concern is that Redfield maintains ties to the Children’s AIDS Fund, and still [sits on its board.](#)” [[The Atlantic, 3/22/18](#)]

ASAP Has A History Of Blaming The LGBTQ Community For AIDS And Ignoring Evidence Based Prevention Methods To Favor Abstinence Promotion.

ASAP Believed AIDS Was “God’s Judgement” Against “Homosexuals.” “In the 1980s Redfield worked closely with W. Shepherd Smith, Jr. and his Christian organization, Americans for a Sound AIDS/HIV Policy, or ASAP. The group maintained that AIDS was ‘God’s judgment’ against homosexuals, spread in an America weakened by single-parent households and loss of family values.” [[CNN, 5/13/18](#)]

The Nation: CAF “See[s] PrEP As Just Another Excuse For People To Act Immorally.” “In September CAF released a policy brief expressing deep reservations about the use of PrEP. Without offering any evidence, the brief claims, ‘Today fewer youth are hearing the message of risk avoidance and increasingly think, ‘if I get infected I’ll just take a pill.’...Instead of looking at the positive impact PrEP could have in reducing HIV transmission, CAF bemoans the loss of ‘traditional’ messages of delaying ‘sexual debut.’ The Smiths and their organization appear to see PrEP as just another excuse for people to act immorally.” [[The Nation, 12/1/14](#)]

The Organization Has Been Determined Unfit For Funding By A Congressional Committee Due To Its “Anti-Gay Positions And Opposition To Condoms.” “Despite having been the subject of multiple investigations—CAF was found unfit for funding by a congressional committee as early as 2004—and repeated questions about its anti-gay positions, opposition to condoms and support for failed abstinence-only-until-marriage approaches, the Smiths continue to be embraced by government officials as experts in the field of HIV and AIDS.” [[The Nation, 12/1/14](#)]

Redfield Wrote An Introduction For CAF Founder W. Shepherd Smith In Which He Denounced Distribution Of Sterile Needles To Drug Users And Condoms To Sexually Active Adults, And Described Anti-Discrimination Programs As The Efforts Of ‘False Prophets.’ “Redfield wrote the introduction to a 1990 book, ‘Christians in the Age of AIDS,’ co-written by Smith, in which he denounced distribution of sterile needles to drug users and condoms to sexually active adults, and described anti-discrimination programs as the efforts of ‘false prophets.’” [[CNN, 5/13/18](#)]

Redfield Has Advocated For The “ABCs Of AIDS”: Abstinence, Being Faithful, Using Condoms (As A Last Resort).

His Support For The ABCs Approach In Africa Was In the 2000s. “In the 2000s, Redfield was a top advocate for the so-called “ABCs of AIDS” in Africa, pressing to prevent HIV infection through sexual abstinence, monogamy and the use of condoms only as a last resort.” [[CNN, 5/13/18](#)]

Despite Redfield's Claims That HIV Stigma Is The "Enemy of Public Health," He Has Actively Contributed To The Stigma

In 2019, Redfield Called "Stigma The Enemy Of Public Health"...

February 2019: Redfield Spoke Of Efforts To Fight The Stigma Surrounding HIV, Especially Among Transgender Individuals. "Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said there will be a serious effort to reach all populations and fight stigma around the disease, particularly among the transgender population and those who may be infected through intravenous drug use. 'Stigma is the enemy of public health,' Dr. Redfield said." [[Washington Times, 2/6/19](#)]

...But In 1985, Redfield Actively Supported Mandatory HIV Testing For The Military, Against The Recommendation Of The CDC.

Redfield Proposed Mandatory Testing, Which Has Long Been Opposed By LGBT Activists. "Dr. Redfield's career has not been without controversy. As an early AIDS researcher, he proposed mandatory testing, a prospect that was opposed by many liberals and gay activists." [[New York Times, 3/17/18](#)]

- **The Testing Involved Investigating Soldiers' Sexual Partners.** "Redfield's early engagement with the AIDS epidemic in the US in the 1980s and 90s was controversial. As an Army major at Walter Reed Medical Institute, he designed policies for controlling the disease within the US military that involved placing infected personnel in quarantine and investigating their pasts to identify and track possible sexual partners. Soldiers were routinely discharged and left to die of AIDS, humiliated and jobless, often abandoned by their families." [[CNN, 5/13/18](#)]

Many Recruits Who Tested Positive Due To The Mandatory Screening Were Resultantly Barred From Service, And Active Soldiers Were Quarantined. "Redfield also has a history of supporting other contentious HIV-related policies. In 1985, he supported an unprecedentedly large program of mandatory HIV screening for the military—against the recommendations of the CDC and other health professionals. After testing positive, many recruits were barred from service, while several active soldiers were segregated, in breach of any patient confidentiality. 'The reason we have done what we have done is that we think it's good medicine,' Redfield told Laurie Garrett, the journalist who broke the news about the segregation, at the time." [[The Atlantic, 3/22/18](#)]

- **The Military's 1980s Battle Against HIV Was "Being Waged With Weapons Such As Blood Testing, Mandatory Pledges To Avoid Risky Sex Practices And Courts-Martial Of Homosexuals."** "As friends looked on, afraid to say anything, Pvt. John O. Brisbois packed his bags last October and left his barracks with no intention of ever going back. Brisbois said he fled the Army, and the only career he had ever wanted, after a demotion and three months of harassment. The trouble came after a blood test showed that he carries the virus that causes AIDS. 'The Army did everything possible to make me want to leave,' said Brisbois, who, after three months absent without leave, surrendered and tried to kill himself. He was discharged last month. 'I feel I don't have a future anymore. I don't want to die, but I get so depressed.' Brisbois, 24, fled a special barracks wing, known on the base as the 'HIV hotel' and 'the leper colony,' to which he

and scores of other soldiers had been transferred. The barracks wing is the armed forces' first consolidated housing for HIV-infected troops. It represents an escalation of the military's battle against acquired immune deficiency syndrome, one that is being waged with weapons such as blood testing, mandatory pledges to avoid risky sex practices and courts-martial of homosexuals--weapons generally not allowed under civilian law." [[LA Times, 3/12/89](#)]

- **Many HIV Positive Soldiers, Once Outed Due To The Mandatory Testing Policy, Were Prosecuted For Being Gay.** "In all the services, HIV-positive soldiers have been denied medical benefits for a variety of reasons, and many have been prosecuted for sodomy, disobedience and other offenses related to sexual activity. According to Small, HIV-positive personnel are questioned about their past sexual contacts by a civilian nurse, and their answers are kept secret. But, he said, the files can be subpoenaed by criminal investigators if someone is prosecuted. 'We all know that,' said one soldier who tested positive. 'So of course, most people lie. They say Barbara and Diane when they really mean Bob and David.'" [[LA Times, 3/12/89](#)]

Redfield And ASAP Backed A House Bill In The Early 1990s That Would Have Subjected American Civilians To The Same Sort Of HIV Testing.

The Bill Would Have Effectively Quarantined Those Who Tested Positive And Stripped Them Of Professional Licenses. "In the early 1990's, ASAP and Redfield also backed H.R. 2788, a House bill sponsored by deeply conservative Rep. William Dannemeyer (R-California). It would have subjected people with HIV to testing, loss of professional licenses and would have effectively quarantined them. (The bill died in Congress.)" [[CNN, 5/13/18](#)]

Redfield Was Also Accused Of Scientific Fraud During A Clinical Trial Of An Experimental HIV Vaccine.

He Was Accused Of "Sloppy Or, Possibly, Deceptive," Data Analysis In 1993. "But Redfield has not escaped the controversy that has dogged other Trump-era appointees. In the mid-1990s, Redfield oversaw a clinical trial of an experimental HIV vaccine at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. He was accused of manipulating data from the trial, "sloppy or, possibly, deceptive" data analysis, and overstating results in a number of talks and publications. After an investigation, the military cleared Redfield of misconduct charges, but as Jon Cohen reported for Science at the time, the Army never provided an explanation of how it reached its conclusions." [[The Atlantic, 3/22/18](#)]

The Investigation Also Criticized Redfield Of His Close Relationship To ASAP. "Redfield was investigated in 1993 by the Army for allegedly misrepresenting data from a trial of an experimental AIDS vaccine meant to treat infected people. Redfield had claimed supposedly promising results from a small clinical trial of the vaccine, which at the time was at the center of a high-powered congressional lobbying campaign, first revealed by Science, that attempted to side-step peer review and fund its expanded testing. The investigation cleared Redfield of scientific misconduct, though it did criticize him for his "close relationship" with a group called Americans for a Sound AIDS/HIV Policy (ASAP) that was founded by evangelical Christians." [[Science Mag, 8/13/93](#)]