

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH OF SPAIN AT THE
OPENING OF THE HEPHIV INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS,
MADRID, NOVEMBER 13th 2023**

Jose Manuel Miñones Conde

Minister of Health

Good afternoon again.

It is an honour for me to give the floor to the acting Minister of Health of Spain, Dr. José Manuel Miñones, and thank him for his presence at this conference, as well as his determined support for the elimination of HIV by the year 2030.

José Manuel Miñones is a Bachelor in Pharmacy, Doctor in Physical Chemistry from the University of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia. In addition to his work as Minister of Health and Government Delegate in Galicia, his municipal work stands out as Mayor of the Ames City Council from 2015 to 2021, Vice President of the Healthy Cities Network and member of the Government Council (2019-2021), Secretary Municipal Policy Executive (Province of A Coruña) of the Galician National Committee and member of the executive (2017-2021). Finally, the Minister has teaching and research experience and was a professor in the Department of Physical Chemistry of the University of Santiago de Compostela, Director of various doctoral theses and research projects.

Minister, once again, thank you for your Support and your commitment.

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Dear attendees of the HepHIV international conference.

It is a great pleasure for me, as Minister of Health of Spain, to participate in the opening ceremony of your conference, to welcome you to Madrid, and to thank you for organizing your congress in Spain, thus showing your support for the Spanish presidency of the council of the European Union.

The **objective** of this conference is to advance the implementation of **integrated diagnosis** of HIV infection, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections, incorporating **technological innovation**, ensuring linkage to health services with a vision of equity in access. Furthermore, you have focused on the impact that **stigma** has on the success of screening programs for HIV and other infections, as well as the **barriers** presented by migrant populations and other displaced populations.

I want to congratulate HepHIV for the choice of these topics, which are aligned with the vision we have in the **Ministry of Health of Spain** since they are strategic objectives to achieve **UNAIDS goals** for year **2030** and **eliminate AIDS** as a **public health problem**. One of the objectives is to achieve **ZERO DISCRIMINATION** and therefore, the elimination of stigma and discrimination associated with HIV has been identified as a political priority of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Taking an **HIV test** is the first step so that people can start **treatment** and have **undetectable viral loads**. The **stigma** and **discrimination** associated with HIV are **barriers** to diagnosing the infection.

We discussed this, as you know, at the **High Level Meeting: “HIV AND HUMAN RIGHTS: POLITICAL ACTION TO ACHIEVE ZERO STIGMA”**, which we held on September 15 at the Reales Alcázares in Seville and which was attended by several representatives of HepHIV, and where we expressed shared commitments to achieve zero stigma.

You all know well that few infectious diseases throughout history have had the levels of **stigma and discrimination** that have accompanied the human immunodeficiency virus, generating an enormous **impact** on the lives of **people with HIV** and jeopardizing the epidemiological objectives of **control and elimination** of the pandemic.

Spain is a country **committed** to the protection and fulfilment of **human rights**. In relation to HIV, the Spanish Ministry of Health has been working in favour of health protection and respect for human rights through joint and articulated work between administrations, health professionals, social actors, civil society and people with HIV.

An example of this commitment was the launch of the **Social Pact for non-discrimination and equal treatment associated with HIV**, in November 2018, with the aim of eliminating the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS, guaranteeing equality of treatment and opportunities, non-discrimination, respect for human rights and the diversity of the people affected.

I want to share with you the **latest data** published by the **Carlos III Health Institute** in coordination with the Ministry of Health on HIV diagnosis in Spain and how, in the period 2021-2022, **92.5%** of people with the HIV in Spain would **know their HIV diagnosis**, **96.6%** are receiving **antiretroviral treatment** and **90.4%** have **suppressed viral load**. We would like to highlight the decrease in the undiagnosed HIV fraction since it has decreased from 13% in the period 2017-2019 to 7.5% in the period 2021-2022. We are pleased with this improvement and without doubt, conferences like this will help us continue improving.

I would like to finish by wishing you an excellent congress, encouraging you to make possible the shared goal of eliminating AIDS as a public health problem by the year 2030.

Thank you very much