

## **Exclude Health Care, Water, And Vital Human Services From GATS and FTAA**

To: Ambassador Robert Zoellick, U.S. Trade Representative  
Cc: Members of U.S. Congress; World Health Organization

**We are concerned that international trade agreements threaten to place economic interests above health, both in the U.S. and abroad.** These agreements have increased economic inequality and negatively affected national economies, displacing workers and straining the social safety net, all of which impair health status. Weakening our right to protect vital human services puts our nation's health at risk. Important negotiations are currently taking place on both the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

**Domestic laws and rules and public programs that protect, provide, and regulate vital human services including health care, water, energy and education are treated as barriers to trade** under GATS, which applies to all 145 World Trade Organization (WTO) nations. **GATS could limit the ability of Congress, or any state or region, to enact and enforce standards for: nursing homes, hospitals, and health insurance; clinician licensing; public subsidies for the safety net and other services; environmental protections; occupational safety and health; distribution of alcohol, tobacco, and firearms; and public administration of safe water and sanitation.**

Vital human services are already covered by basic GATS trade rules. The USTR and other trade representatives are now exchanging offers for particular services that will be subject to certain more invasive rules. These rules, known as national treatment and market access, could be used to challenge domestic regulations that limit the number and distribution of services if they are provided by private transnational companies, and that limit foreign direct investment, among other provisions. The US and the European Union, major forces in the WTO, are both asking other countries and each other to cover health care, distribution of alcohol and tobacco, and water and sanitation under the expanded rules, while issuing statements suggesting that their own services will be protected.

The FTAA would impose all GATS services rules, without exception, on the 34 countries in the western hemisphere, except Cuba. It also would reinforce some of the most troubling WTO rules on drug patents, and agriculture. The investors' rights provision of the FTAA goes beyond NAFTA's, and grants rights to private corporations to legally challenge domestic regulations, even those designed to protect health and in the public interest. This threatens to undermine Congressional prerogatives and state and local sovereignty.

It concerns us that appointed trade tribunals, which deliberate secretly without public accountability, have the power to decide whether regulatory protection of our vital human services conflicts with trade rules, and to impose financial penalties on the U.S. and other countries that exercise those protections.

We are also concerned that critical terms of the negotiations are not publicly known, and that there is no voice for health care or public health involved in the negotiating process.

United States policy and action play a pivotal role in shaping the ground rules for global trade. The U.S. has an important opportunity to promote a safe and just global community with publicly accountable and sustainable health care, water, and other vital human services. To this end, we urge the United States to:

1. Call for an assessment of the impact of GATS and FTAA on population health, as provided for in GATS Article XIX, and assure based on such assessment that policy proposals do not have an adverse impact on health.
2. Exclude vital human services such as health and water from trade negotiations and challenge under the GATS and FTAA, both for the U.S. and for all countries.
3. Include public health representatives in the negotiating advisory process, and promote transparency and democratic accountability at all levels of trade negotiations.
4. Support enforceable commitments to advancing population health, and to achieving universal access to health care and to safe, affordable water in the U.S. and internationally.

### **EVERYONE'S HEALTH IS AT STAKE**

**Name:**

**Organization:**

**Email:**

### U.S. National Organizations

AIDS Treatment News  
American Medical Students Association  
American Public Health Association  
    APHA Occupational Health & Safety Section  
American Nurses Association  
Avanti Environmental  
Boston Women's Health Book Collective  
Center for Economic and Social Rights  
Center for Policy Analysis on Trade and Health  
Center for Reflection, Education and Action  
Center for Science in the Public Interest, Alcohol  
    Policies Project  
Center for Women's Global Leadership  
Center on Work and Community Development  
Democratizing the Global Economy Project,  
    American Friends Service Committee  
Environmental Health Coalition  
Environment and Human Health  
Globalization Forum  
Global Health Access Program  
Health Alliance International  
Health GAP (Global Access Project)  
Hispanic Health Council  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
International Health & Development Associates  
Maquiladora Health and Safety Support Network  
National Association of Community Health Centers  
National Women's Health Network  
Network, A Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
Organic Consumers Association  
Physicians for Human Rights  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
  
Project Inform  
The Title II Community AIDS National Network  
Trauma Foundation  
Women's Edge  
Women's Health Institute

### U.S. Regional Organizations

ACT UP East Bay, Oakland, CA  
ACT UP/Cleveland  
ACT UP/LA  
AIDS Action Baltimore  
Alivio Medical Center, Chicago  
Berkeley Gray Panthers  
California Public Health Association - North (CPHA-N)  
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of Nazareth, KY  
 Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers (FOG)  
 Hawai'i Public Health Association  
 Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition  
 Justice through Public Health, UC Berkeley  
 Northwest Coalition for AIDS Treatment in Africa  
 (NCATA)  
 Northwest International Health Action Coalition (NIHAC)  
 Public Health Association of New York City  
 Southern California Public Health Association (SCPHA)  
 Westside Health Authority

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International Organizations

AIDSETI - AIDS Empowerment &  
 Treatment International  
 All Africa Women for Peace  
 Alliance for Justice, Medical Mission Sisters  
 Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network  
 Canadian Treatment Action Council  
 C. I. C.O.P Coordinadora Interhospitalaria  
 del Conurbano y la Provincia.  
 CORPRODESA  
 DECA Equipo Pueblo,A.C.  
 Institute for Global Justice (IGJ)  
 Lokoj  
 One World Action  
 Plate-forme haïtienne de Plaidoyer pour  
 un Développement Altternatif (PAPDA)  
 Public Health Association of Bangladesh

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