

New Leader for PEPFAR. By Sara Jerving, *Devex*, 11 June 2026

The Trump administration has [finally nominated](#) someone to serve as the [U.S. State Department](#)'s ambassador-at-large for global health security and diplomacy, and coordinator of U.S. activities to combat HIV/AIDS globally: **Johnny Figueroa**. The Senate still needs to confirm him.

The move comes **after nearly a year and a half without a nominee** for the U.S. government's most prominent global health post.

Under the Biden administration, **this role was held by Dr. John Nkengasong** — who led the [U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief](#). Biden made Nkengasong's nomination eight months after taking office.

"I am relieved that this Administration finally nominated an Ambassador for Global Health Security and Diplomacy," **Mitchell Warren**, executive director of [AVAC](#), tells me. The timing matters, he says, given pressing global health threats, such as the ongoing Ebola outbreak, and the U.S.' commitment to scale up lenacapavir for HIV prevention.

Jirair Ratevosian, who was a senior adviser for health equity policy at the State Department during the Biden administration, tells me that the next coordinator **will inherit "extraordinary scientific momentum," but also a very different PEPFAR** than the one that built its global reputation.

"The brand remains exceptionally strong, yet there are unresolved questions around transition planning, accountability, and what success should look like in the next phase of the HIV response," he says. "HIV is far from over."

One benefit of having a Senate-confirmed coordinator is the opportunity for the State Department to have **greater direct engagement with Congress**, advocates, implementing partners, and country leaders to articulate a clear vision for the future of PEPFAR and American support for

global health, he says.

This person would also oversee U.S. engagement with the [Global Fund](#) and the Pandemic Fund, alongside PEPFAR and broader U.S. global health security coordination — so **there is no more consequential role in global health** in the U.S. government than this one, Ratevosian says.

Figueroa is currently a [senior adviser](#) to the U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, with 36 years of healthcare experience. He is the founder of CarepathRx, a company that focuses on pharmacy care delivery for health systems and hospitals.

But is he the best person for the job? That's to be determined. Warren says that for over 20 years, PEPFAR and U.S. global health security and diplomacy have been led by individuals with deep experience and relationships within the HIV, tuberculosis, and global health sector.

“Mr. Figueroa does have extensive experience in the U.S. healthcare system, but it is not yet clear how he will navigate the rapidly changing global health ecosystem, making his nomination hearings all the more important to understand his understanding, commitment and vision,” Warren says.