

**Nominee to head PEPFAR.** By Anna Gawel, *Devex*, 15 June 2026

### **Heeeeeere's Johnny**

The State Department isn't standing still either, especially when it comes to global health. It's been steadily rolling out its America First Global Health Strategy all year, signing bilateral compacts worth billions of dollars with over 30 governments.

It also just made [another big move](#) on the health front, **nominating Johnny Figueroa to be ambassador-at-large for global health security** and diplomacy and coordinator of U.S. activities to combat HIV/AIDS globally. That would make Figueroa, who still needs Senate confirmation, the next ambassador to lead the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or [PEPFAR](#)

Dr. **Michael J.A. Reid**, former chief science officer at PEPFAR, hopes Figueroa doesn't wind up **presiding over the "enshittification" of the agency.**

Come again?

"Enshittification was coined in the early 2020s to describe the slow decline of once-beloved digital platforms," Reid writes [in a Devex opinion piece](#). **"First they serve users. Then they serve managers.** Eventually they only serve profits and performance metrics. Decisions that once prioritized the people an institution exists to serve become increasingly driven by efficiency, cost savings, and internal targets."

Reid worries the same thing could happen to PEPFAR, especially given the Trump administration's push for countries to take ownership of their HIV response, which he doesn't inherently disagree with.

**"But ownership is not the same as abandonment,"** Reid warns, noting that successful transitions "require resources, capacity, and time."

Reid says Figueroa's background in healthcare operations, pharmacy services, and large-scale organizational management **"may make him an unusual, but potentially well-suited choice for this moment."**

"PEPFAR undoubtedly needs to become more efficient, accountable, and increasingly country-led," he writes. "Yet his central challenge will be ensuring that efficiency strengthens rather than undermines effectiveness."

**Opinion:** [What Johnny Figueroa's nomination means for PEPFAR's future](#)