



# DIGNITAS

June 15, 2019

Dear Friends of Dignitas,

Dignitas International began in Toronto as an emergency humanitarian response to the AIDS pandemic in the poorest corner of the poorest country in the world. The founding principle was to build capacity in an under-resourced health care system and generate research that would demonstrate the efficacy of our community-based health care model and thereby contribute to better solutions for vulnerable populations around the world that were being decimated by the HIV virus.

For 15 years Dignitas fulfilled this mandate, punching far above its weight as a small but incredibly nimble NGO. During this period Dignitas made significant contributions to global health: we have helped more than 1.7 million people get tested for HIV; we have started more than 300,000 people on HIV treatment; we have trained 12,000+ health workers, and have contributed to nearly 100 major scientific publications. We are particularly proud of the work we have done in the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV. Also, more recently, our model of health care system strengthening has been used in partnership with Indigenous communities in Canada – a testament to the global impact of our work.

As our project grew and gained traction USAID became the primary funder of our field work. Unfortunately, in 2018, we were advised that this funding would come to an end. Our reliance on a single donor in Malawi had always been a cause for concern and tremendous effort was put into diversifying our donor base. Ultimately alternative sources of funding needed to replace USAID were not obtained.

In light of this situation, the Board of Directors of Dignitas decided that our current projects, programs and research programs would be better supported within larger international organizations or universities. As well, much of our front-line work in Malawi can now be carried out by the Malawian Ministry of Health, which reflects in part our work in building local capacity.

The decision to wind down our operations was a difficult one and every effort has been made to mitigate any disruption to the people we serve, as well as our staff, partners and donors. We are proud to announce that nearly all programs and associate funds will transfer to other partners or collaborators of Dignitas, together with many of our staff.



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We wish to thank the many donors and partners who have been with us on this inspiring journey. Rest assured, the work we have done together will continue to make a real difference in the lives of millions of people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Keenan', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jennifer Keenan  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Dignitas International