

An entire generation may not remember the terror that AIDS created in the early 1980s. Back then, people would show up in the emergency room, sick and confused, and die within hours or days.

Since then, medical science has made astonishing progress. Antiretroviral drugs allow millions of people with HIV, in the United States and throughout the world, to lead normal lives and enjoy near-normal life expectancy.

This progress is not an accident. It is a major achievement of medical science and, just as importantly, a major success of public policy.

In 2003, President Bush embraced an idea initially offered by the Congressional Black Caucus to invest \$15 billion in the prevention of AIDS worldwide – an effort that I have since worked to renew and expand.

Last year alone, the U.S. provided lifesaving drug treatment to nearly 4 million men, women, and children worldwide. We also provided HIV counseling and testing for more than 40 million people, including 10 million pregnant women. Mother-to-child transmission has been greatly reduced.

These investments in global health have not only saved lives; they also have built tremendous international goodwill toward the United States, and they have restrained the spread of HIV in ways that have prevented more infections here at home.

Much remains to be done. There are 50,000 new HIV infections in the U.S. each year and many more worldwide. Many people still carry tragic misunderstandings and misconceptions about HIV and AIDS. The disease remains incurable, and it still cannot be prevented by vaccine. These are among the challenges that international leaders will address later this month when the International AIDS Conference meets in D.C.

But through bold, effective, and measurable public policy interventions, the United States already has saved many lives and fought the scourge of a terrifying disease.

### **Next Week: Town Halls in Franklin Twp., Old Bridge, and Over the Phone**

Next week, I'll be hosting several forums to share news from Congress and to hear directly from you.

On Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., I'll hold a telephone town hall open to all residents of central New Jersey. Many of you will automatically receive calls on Tuesday evening inviting you to join; to ensure that you are called, please visit <http://holt.house.gov/townhall> or call 1-87-RUSH-HOLT.

Then, on Saturday, I'll host in-person town halls in Franklin Township and in Old Bridge:

#### **Saturday, July 21, 2012**

10:00 a.m.

Franklin Municipal Building Council Chambers  
475 DeMott Lane  
Somerset, New Jersey

1:00 p.m.

Municipal Court Chambers  
Old Bridge Municipal Building  
1 Old Bridge Plaza  
Old Bridge Township, New Jersey

#### **The Higgs Boson, Almost Certainly – Well, Possibly**

Last week, a team of thousands of scientists from around the world, [including about 15 from](#)

### [Princeton University](#)

announced the long-expected discovery of a new elementary particle. They appear to have found the Higgs boson, or something very much like it. This could be the final piece of the jigsaw puzzle that is the so-called Standard Model of particle physics, which explains how the basic building blocks of the universe fit together – everything you see and much that you don't.

Several people have commented to me that they were struck by how tentatively scientists announced the news. One physicist, for example, told the Associated Press, “We’ve discovered something which is *consistent with being* a Higgs.”

To me, this serves as a reminder that science is based on probabilistic reasoning. Scientists are trained to be comfortable with uncertainty – more so than non-scientists, and certainly more so than politicians.

The process of science leads to knowledge that is more and more reliable, but always tentative. It might be good if more people, especially politicians, kept in mind – at least in the back of their minds – that they might be wrong. Do you think we could make more progress in society then?

Sincerely,

Rush Holt  
Member of Congress