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## OPINION

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### *GLOBAL HEALTH*

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We all can play a role in improving global health. We applaud the New Year's Day editorial "Gates Foundation: Healthy ventures" for highlighting the importance of using aid to develop strong public health services in underdeveloped nations. It is impossible to build those systems without competent local health professionals to staff them.

Health Alliance International has worked in Mozambique since 1987, where only three physicians and 21 nurses serve the needs of every 100,000 people. Wage freezes and hiring moratoriums imposed by the International Monetary Fund have contributed to the human resources crisis that the country faces.

The "brain drain" from poor countries also is directly linked to our failure to invest in our deteriorating public health care system at home. The more we neglect our own public health infrastructure and let the market dictate health care provision in the U.S., the fewer resources are available to maintain and develop our domestic work force of health providers, the more we poach health care workers from those countries most in need of them.

As U.S. citizens we can do a lot for people living with AIDS in Africa by supporting public health infrastructure and human resources abroad and a strong adequately funded public health system here at home.

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