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This paper argues that in order to ensure that U.S. global AIDS strategies promote justice and equity and reflect international consensus on the ethical principles guiding access to health care, the United States must take proactive steps to address the barriers to access to ARVs faced by women. There is no consistent formula for ensuring equity in access to treatment given scarce resources. At the same time, a set of standard considerations, guidelines or questions can and must be formulated and applied within each setting to ensure that concerns for gender equity and social justice are incorporated into treatment access schemes. Such guidelines can be used to ensure consistent application of ethical principles to treatment access, while reflecting specific circumstances, and should be carefully reviewed on a regular basis in response to changes in the dynamics of the epidemic or as treatment access expands. Through literature review and field research, this paper identifies essential elements of a gender-sensitive approach to treatment access.

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