



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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The AIDS Institute Commends Members of Congress for Seeking Increases for AIDS Drug Assistance Programs

House Budget Resolution and Letters to Appropriation Chairs Signal Widespread Support for Increased Funding

Washington, DC - The AIDS Institute is pleased to witness growing Congressional support for increased funding to the Nation's struggling AIDS Drugs Assistance Program (ADAP) for low-income people with HIV/AIDS. "After President Bush asked Congress to end state waiting lists for AIDS medicines in his 'State of the Union', and proposed \$70 million for additional funding in his budget, The AIDS Institute is gratified by the level of support demonstrated by the Congress for increased ADAP funding," said Dr. Gene Copello, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute.

For the first time, the House Budget Resolution contained language on the importance of ADAPs and in support of increased ADAP funding. In report language, the Budget Committee commented on the President's proposed budget increases by stating, "While this will not provide AIDS medications for everyone who needs them, it is a worthy increase and the committee recognizes the importance of funding this program at adequate levels." The Committee described ADAP as "an extremely successful program and today is keeping over 100,000 people alive throughout the Nation," and noted, "since people are living longer, demand for HIV/AIDS treatment is at an all-time high"

"While we are not pleased with the current level of health-care discretionary spending proposed in the Budget," commented Dr. Copello, "we thank Budget Chairman Jim Nussle (R-IA) for including the strong statement of support of ADAPs and Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX) for authoring it."

"We are also gratified by the high level of bi-partisan support for increased ADAP funding demonstrated in Congressional letters to both House and Senate Chairmen of the House Appropriations Labor, HHS, and Education Subcommittees," continued Dr. Copello.

In a bipartisan letter authored by Sens. Gordon Smith(R-OR) and Jeff Bingaman(D-NM), 31 Senators asked Chairman Arlen Specter to support an increase of \$197 million for ADAP in FY07, which equals the community agreed upon need number. Separately, four Republican Senators led by Sen. Tom Coburn, asked Chairman Specter to increase ADAP funding by at least \$70 million in FY07. Joining Sen. Coburn on his letter were Sens. Rick Santorum, Lamar Alexander, and Richard Burr.

Over in the House, Reps. Mary Bono (R-CA) and Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) joined together with 79 of their colleagues in signing onto a letter to Chairman Ralph Regula asking him to increase ADAP funding by \$197 million in FY07.

“The AIDS Institute hopes this high level of bipartisan support for increased ADAP funding will translate into increased Appropriations for the ADAP Program,” said Carl Schmid, Director of Federal Affairs for The AIDS Institute. “After receiving only a \$2 million increase last year, ADAPs across the country are facing severe funding shortages and instituting access restrictions. This will lead to dangerous treatment interruptions, which can encourage drug resistance and discourage patient retention in care.”

In the recently released “National ADAP Monitoring Project Annual Survey”, it was reported that 17 states have instituted access restrictions to their program due to inadequate funding, and in FY06 it is expected that an additional 9 states will institute new cost containment measures. In February, 2006, 9 state ADAPs had a total of 791 people waiting for their HIV/AIDS medications.

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For more information and to become involved in AIDS advocacy work, please contact The AIDS Institute at: (202) 835-8373, or by email at: Info@theaidsinstitute.org or www.TheAIDSInstitute.org

The AIDS Institute is a national nonprofit agency that promotes action for social change through public policy research, advocacy and education.