



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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## The AIDS Institute Comments on Ryan White Modernization Act

### *VOICES STRONG CONCERN OVER LIMITED FUNDING LEVELS TO CARRY IT OUT*

Washington, DC - The AIDS Institute commends the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions for approving on a 19 to 1 vote legislation reauthorizing the Ryan White CARE Act (CARE Act).

The legislation, known as the Ryan White Modernization Act of 2006, maintains the current structure of the CARE Act and seeks to respond to the current changes in the epidemic while also attempting to maintain the current HIV care and treatment infrastructure. This legislation reflects many of the changes proposed by The AIDS Institute for the CARE Act as expressed in the Institute's reauthorization policy positions over the past three years. The Senate bill represents a true bi-cameral (Senate and House of Representatives) effort, relying on a bi-partisan process to update and modernize the CARE Act to reflect current treatments and services. It would, for example, require that 75 percent of federal funds be spent on core medical services, and gives more metropolitan areas access to Title I funding. It also seeks to base funding allocations on HIV cases, not just AIDS cases, which gives a truer representation of where the epidemic is today.

"While we support most of the legislative changes in the bill, it places unrealistically low funding levels on CARE Act programs for the next five years," said Dr. Gene Copello, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. Carl Schmid, Director of Federal Affairs at The AIDS Institute further cautioned, "The authorization levels do not provide enough funding to meet growing patient case loads, which will leave many people with HIV and AIDS without adequate access to care and treatment."

Many of the nation's AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs), for example, are chronically under funded and several have patient waiting lists. While the bill requires ADAPs to cover a core list of federally approved medications, and despite some new elements to address states with ADAP shortages, there will not be enough financial resources in the future to provide medications in every state." Copello added, "We are hopeful that the high priority being placed on access to life-saving medications will translate into increased access to those medications through other CARE Act programs in addition to ADAP."

“We are very concerned about the lack of adequate funding for the CARE Act, said Marilyn Merida, President of the Board of Directors of The AIDS Institute. She continued, “We will not achieve the important goals of this modernization legislation without adequate congressional funding”.

The bi-cameral, bi-partisan group working on the bill released an initial draft during the week of May 8, and revised the legislation based on the concerns expressed by several organizations, including The AIDS Institute, making key changes that further strengthened the legislation.

“The AIDS Institute is grateful that Congress made necessary changes to the bill based on community input,” Copello said. He concluded, “As it progresses to the Senate floor and through the House, we look forward to providing additional comments to the Congress to better perfect this legislation which is so critical to the health and wellness of the 500,000 low-income people living with HIV/AIDS it seeks to serve.”

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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](mailto:Info@theaidsinstitute.org) or [www.TheAIDSInstitute.org](http://www.TheAIDSInstitute.org)

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