



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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The AIDS Institute Comments on House Funding Legislation for FY 07

Washington, DC - The AIDS Institute expresses mixed reactions and concerns about an FY 2007 appropriations bill now moving through Congress that flat funds all but one Title of the Ryan White CARE Act and provides \$63 million for a new HIV testing initiative at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The House Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations Subcommittee approved a spending bill that provides a \$70 million increase for Title II of the Ryan White Care Act - money that HHS can use for states with financially strapped AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs), which are primarily funded under Title II of the CARE Act. Subcommittee members endorsed the \$70 million increase and approved another \$63 million for a CDC testing initiative in a bill that eliminates 56 other programs for a savings of \$1.7 billion.

"While we are appreciative of the additional funds for medications for states in greatest need, the subcommittee didn't add money to the overall ADAP budget," said Dr. Gene Copello, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. "The ADAPs are struggling to keep nearly 140,000 uninsured and underinsured people with HIV/AIDS healthy and alive around the country. Without increases to ADAPs, we will probably begin to see waiting lists for drugs and other cost containment measures in some of the high incidence states where demand for the medications continues to rise. We hope as the funding measure moves through Congress additional money for ADAP and the other critical parts of the CARE Act will be included in the bill."

Level funding, Copello points out, really amounts to a funding cut when certain factors are taken into consideration - the number of new annual HIV infections and rising inflation rates.

The Ryan White CARE Act provides necessary health care, medications and social services to more than 571,000 uninsured and underinsured people with HIV/AIDS, making it the largest source of dedicated HIV/AIDS funding in the country. Every title of the CARE Act - except for minimal increases in Title II - has experienced level funding and even cuts in recent years because of rescissions. These cuts are taking place despite a greater demand for services fueled

by the effectiveness of combination therapies in extending lives, new infections and rising health care costs.

President Bush requested a \$95 million increase for Ryan White but the subcommittee approved a \$70 million increase instead. The President also proposed \$93 million for the new CDC testing initiative, \$30 million more than the subcommittee approved. Approximately one quarter of the 1.1 million people in the United States with HIV are unaware of their status.

“While the subcommittee did not fully fund this initiative, the \$63 million is a good start and we will work to increase it,” said Copello. “We would also like to see further increases to CDC’s AIDS prevention budget to provide more comprehensive prevention programs so that we can put a dent in the 40,000 new infections each year.”

The subcommittee supported the president’s request of flat funding for medical research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including a \$15 million cut in AIDS research at NIH.

“We are greatly disappointed in the subcommittee’s decision to go along with the President’s request of flat funding medical research at NIH,” said Peter Gamache, Director of Research at The AIDS Institute. “We should be investing in new drug therapies as well as vaccines, microbicides, and other prevention research.”

The AIDS Institute congratulates the House for increasing global HIV/AIDS funding by \$752 in the Foreign Operations appropriations bill but is disappointed with the Labor HHS and Education Subcommittee for eliminating a \$100 million contribution to the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The full House Appropriations Committee, meanwhile, approved a \$14 million increase for the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS Program, proposed by the President as part of the Transportation, Treasury and HUD Appropriation Bill.

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For more information and to become involved in AIDS advocacy, 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.