



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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# ActionLink

News Service of The AIDS Institute

## The AIDS Institute Strongly Urges Congress to Fund Domestic AIDS Programs

**July 12, 2006 - Washington, DC:** The AIDS Institute sent a strongly worded letter to Senate leaders on July 10, urging them to adequately fund domestic HIV/AIDS programs, including the nation's AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs), which have been severely under funded during the past several years.

The letter, sent to the chairman and ranking member of a key Senate subcommittee as it prepares to mark up an FY07 appropriations bill, reminds the Senators that President George W. Bush called on Congress to support key HIV/AIDS initiatives during his State of the Union address in January, including an increase in spending for medications and wider use of rapid HIV testing to expand testing initiatives. President Bush proposed a \$95 million increase for the Ryan White CARE Act in FY07 – a \$70 million increase for medications, and a \$25 million increase for Title III of the Ryan White CARE Act to strengthen outreach efforts. President Bush also endorsed an additional \$93 million for the CDC to increase HIV testing.

"The AIDS Institute strongly supports these increases and asks the Senate to include them in its version of the FY07 funding bill," wrote Dr. Gene Copello, Executive Director of the The AIDS Institute, in the letter to Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA).

Copello pointed out that the actual need number for ADAPs in FY07 is an increase of \$196.6 million. He added, however, that a "minimum \$70 million increase would at least begin to address the needs of many individuals in need of -- but unable to obtain -- medications through ADAP." "Years of under-funding have created a crisis with many states having to restrict access to treatment by creating waiting lists, lowering eligibility requirements and reducing drug formularies," Copello continued.

Copello expressed strong disappointment that the House committee on appropriations did not provide any increases for ADAPs in FY07 when it marked up its version of an appropriations bill in June, and urged the Senate to "correct this severe under funding."

Copello also reminded the Senate leaders that Congress has flat funded most titles of the Ryan White CARE Act for the past several years – flat funding levels that have actually resulted in funding reductions because of congressional rescissions. The reductions have occurred even though people with HIV and AIDS are living longer and new HIV infections continue to increase by about 40,000 a year.

The AIDS Institute, in its letter to the Senators, also urged greater funding for the National Institutes of Health for continued AIDS research. The President has proposed a \$15 million cut in AIDS research at NIH in FY07.

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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](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.