Thank you for providing this opportunity to offer public comment to you this afternoon. Congratulations on your letter to the President and the Secretary which details your suggested next steps in implementing the National HIV/AIDS Strategy. The AIDS Institute is very pleased that you address the growing ADAP crisis in our country and the immediate need for increased federal resources until 2014 when health reform is implemented. We also thank you for recognizing that the problem is not just the number of people on wait lists but the growing number of states that are lowering income eligibility and reducing drug formularies.

Removing people from ADAP due to lowering income eligibility is a serious concern, but without new resources that is what some states are being forced to do. As you point out in your letter, there is now overwhelming evidence of the positive impact of treatment. However, we all know that once a patient begins taking medications, it is extremely critical that they continue to take them daily or risk developing drug resistance and dangerous health outcomes.

That is why we were alarmed when we heard how the Administration decided to distribute the additional $50 million in FY11 ADAP funding. No state could receive more than $3 million from the competitive portion of the award. As a result, despite having over 3,680 people on the waiting list, which is over 40 percent of the national total, Florida would see little benefit from the new funding. It would not even be enough to keep all of the people on their medications that benefited from the emergency $25 million the Administration distributed last summer, of which Florida received $7 million. Florida would have been forced to remove people on medications from the program.

In reaction to our concerns and others, yesterday the Administration partially reversed itself and agreed that states can receive up to the amount they received last summer to ensure people can stay on their medications. While we were pleased to hear this, it will not make a dent into reducing Florida’s waiting list. Despite the doubling of emergency ADAP funding, Florida will basically be restricted to receiving the same level as last year.

Despite having 42% of the wait lists nationwide, Florida will only be eligible to receive up to 18% of the competitive portion of the funds. We again ask the Administration to reconsider their decision and provide Florida with ADAP emergency relief funding that reflects the state’s share of the need. We ask for your support in our request.

Thank you.

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