DOMESTIC HIV PROGRAMS CUT BY $375 MILLION; 
$1.1 BILLION MORE AT RISK DUE TO HOUSE BUDGET 
Jeopardizes Current Progress & Endangers the Nation’s Public Health

Washington, DC – Sequestration and other budget cuts already have resulted in cuts of $375 million from the federal government’s response to the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic. If the cuts outlined in the House of Representative’s budget are applied across the board, an additional $1.1 billion would be cut, according to an analysis issued today by The AIDS Institute.

“The impact of sequestration and other federal budget cuts are now a reality. Because sequestration was applied indiscriminately across the board, critical programs that protect the Nation from infectious diseases, such as HIV, were cut, resulting in dangerous ramifications to the lives of thousands of people and the public’s health,” commented Carl Schmid, Deputy Executive Director of The AIDS Institute.

“These reductions over the last two years pale in comparison to what is possible if the cuts and allocations outlined by the House become a reality in FY14. A whopping $1.1 billion more would be cut for a total of almost $1.5 billion in losses, or a 23 percent decrease over three years. The AIDS Institute urges the Congress and the President to resolve the federal budget crisis in a balanced manner and put an end to this assault on the Nation’s health,” continued Schmid.

In its analysis, The AIDS Institute examined the impact of budget cuts and sequestration on four federal domestic HIV/AIDS programs subject to annual federal appropriations, all of which were impacted by sequestration. They included HIV prevention at the CDC; care and treatment provided to 550,000 low-income people through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, which includes the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP); AIDS research at the NIH; and the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program at HUD, which serves homeless people with AIDS.

CDC HIV prevention has been cut by almost $60 million in the last two years and could be cut in FY14 by an additional $138 million for a total loss in funding of $183 million, or over 23% in three years. The Ryan White Program was cut $144 million in FY13, with
ADAP losing $47 million. If the Obama Administration had not transferred $35 million to ADAP from other sources, the loss would have been $82 million. For FY14, if the House Budget was followed the Ryan White Program would lose an additional $418 million, with ADAP accounting for $165 million of that loss. NIH AIDS Research was reduced by $173 million in FY13, and could potentially lose another $538 million in FY14 for a total loss of $710 million. HOPWA has lost nearly $20 million in the last two years and the House Appropriations Subcommittee is recommending that it be cut by an additional $15 million in FY14.

President Obama and the US Senate have taken different approaches to the federal budget and propose to replace the harmful sequestration and adequately fund non-defense discretionary programs, including domestic HIV/AIDS programs.

Most of these federal funds are distributed to states, local jurisdictions, community based organizations, and research facilities in the form of grants. Many of the grant awards have not been released yet so it is unknown what the exact impact will be on the ground.

However, we can predict that cuts to HIV prevention will lead to fewer HIV testing and outreach efforts which will lead to increased infections. Less funding for the Ryan White Program, including ADAP, will lead to clinics laying off doctors, nurses and other staff at a time when there are more people living with HIV than ever before. The loss of ADAP funding will lead to states not being able to maintain funding for patients currently on lifesaving medications, jeopardizing the health of thousands of people. It is estimated that the loss of the $47 million in ADAP funding this year alone could result in 8,000 people losing access to medications. Fewer dollars for research will set us back in efforts to find a vaccine or a cure, and cuts to HOPWA will leave more people with AIDS homeless.

“The Budget proposed by the House and the allocations assigned to the Labor, HHS, and Education Subcommittee are clearly unworkable,” commented Michael Ruppal, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. “While the potential cuts we have outlined for FY14 seem unrealistic, we must remember that no one ever thought the cuts due to sequestration would occur, but they did. With a National HIV/AIDS Strategy grounded in science that paves the way to decrease the 50,000 new infections per year and calls for increasing care and treatment to the nearly 1.2 million people living with HIV in the US, it would be reckless to go backwards in our fight against AIDS, but that is what will happen if these cuts are not restored. We call on the Congress and the President to restore these harmful cuts, save lives, and prevent future harm to domestic HIV programs,” concluded Ruppal.

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