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HOUSE FLOOR AMENDMENTS INCREASE DOMESTIC HIV & HEPATITIS FUNDING

Strengthen Spending Bill that Greatly Enhances Nation’s Response to HIV and Viral Hepatitis

Washington, DC - Today, the House of Representatives passed two amendments that would provide $20 million in additional funding to programs that will prevent new cases of HIV and viral hepatitis stemming from the nation’s opioid epidemic and improve HIV prevention and care services in minority communities.

As part of its consideration of the Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) appropriations bill (HR 2740), which includes significant increases to domestic HIV and hepatitis programs, the two amendments were offered by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell (D-FL).

The Ocasio-Cortez amendment, which passed by a vote of 264 to 158, would increase funding by $15 million for Opioid Related Infectious Disease programs at the CDC. The opioid crisis has caused an increase in HIV and hepatitis transmission in communities across the country, and the additional funding will help the CDC provide education and prevention services to combat the spread of these infectious diseases.

“We are thrilled that the legislation The AIDS Institute played a leading role in, is receiving such strong support,” commented Frank Hood, Senior Policy Associate at The AIDS Institute. “The increase of infectious diseases is an often-overlooked result of injection drug use associated with the nation’s opioid epidemic. We welcome this new funding, which brings the total to $35 million, but there is still a great need to adequately address the full scope of this crisis.”
The Mucarsel-Powell amendment, which passed by a vote of 281 to 138, will provide $5 million in additional funding for the Minority HIV/AIDS Fund. This will bring the total funding for the program to $65 million and improve prevention, care, and treatment services for racial and ethnic minorities who are affected by HIV.

“Minority communities are disproportionately impacted by HIV,” said Nick Armstrong, Public Policy Associate at The AIDS Institute. “If we are to succeed in ending the HIV epidemic, we must take action to reduce racial disparities in access to treatment and prevention services in the communities most impacted by HIV, including African-Americans and Latinos.”

The appropriations bill, which is still being considered by the House, provides historic increases to domestic HIV, hepatitis and related programs. Under the leadership of Labor HHS Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro the bill provides an increase of $515 million for domestic HIV and hepatitis programs, including funding for the Administration’s Ending the HIV Epidemic initiative. The AIDS Institute encourages the Senate Appropriations Committee to include similar funding levels for these important public health programs in its FY20 appropriations bill.

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

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