



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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Mother of Ryan White Visits Nation's Capital, Urges Congress to Maintain Commitment to People with HIV/AIDS in the U.S.

Scheduled to Meet with Minority Leader Pelosi, Health Committee Leaders Reps. Upton, Waxman & Appropriators Reps. DeLauro, Lee

Washington, DC – As the fight against HIV/AIDS turns a new corner with growing evidence of the importance of AIDS treatment and the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Jeanne White-Ginder – the mother of Ryan White – the namesake of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, today returned to our nation's capital to remind lawmakers of the continued importance of maintaining and fully funding the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program.

White-Ginder joined [The AIDS Institute](http://TheAIDSInstitute.org) - a national nonprofit that promotes action for social change through public policy, advocacy, research and education in the areas of HIV and hepatitis - at a press conference this morning at the National Press Club. White-Ginder and The AIDS Institute discussed the critical need for continuing funding of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, which provides medical care, lifesaving medications, and other essential services to poor people living with HIV/AIDS, and to seize upon the moment in order to dramatically increase the number of people in care and on treatment.

“When Ryan was a teenager living with AIDS in the early 1990s there was little the medical community could offer him, but we tried all we could,” commented White-Ginder at this morning's press conference. **“Today, with proper treatment, thanks to antiretroviral medications, people living with HIV can live relatively healthy lives if they are first tested and linked to and retained in care. I'm in Washington to urge members of Congress to fully fund the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program so the more than half a million people currently being helped by the program continue to receive life-saving care and the ones who are not can take advantage of AIDS treatment.”**

“We are at a critical moment in the fight to combat HIV/AIDS in America,” said Michael Ruppel, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. **“We can actually end AIDS if people are first tested and diagnosed, and then linked to and retained in care and treatment. Not only does AIDS treatment help people live healthy lives but it prevents transmission of the virus. With the expanded opportunities for health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act, together with the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, we can greatly expand the number of people tested for HIV and brought into care and treatment.”**

This afternoon, Jeanne White-Ginder and representatives of The AIDS Institute are scheduled to meet with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), as well as House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI) and Ranking Member Henry Waxman (D-CA), and House Appropriations Sub-Committee on Health members Reps. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) (Ranking) and Barbara Lee (D-CA), along with others.

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS program acts as a payer of last resort and offers health care, prescription medications, and other essential services that help retain people with HIV in care and on treatment. It also assists clients with paying insurance premiums and other out-of-pocket expenses.

“Many Congressional leaders, from U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman and Senator Tom Harkin, have been true heroes for people living with HIV. I am afraid with their departure, along with several others and the loss of champions such as Senator Ted Kennedy, the U.S. Congress may forget about Ryan, the suffering of people with HIV in the United States, and the continuing need for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program. That is why it is imperative that Congress – and its emerging leaders – commit themselves to maintaining the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program and ending AIDS in the United States and around the world.

“For almost 25 years, the Program has helped saved countless lives. I am here for Ryan to remind our leaders that we cannot forget him or the 650,000 others who have died of AIDS and the over 1.1 million people currently living with HIV in the U.S. It is my hope that during my visit to Capitol Hill, they will listen to the story of a mother and her son and the hope that people with HIV have today if they have access to the medical care, medications and other services that are offered through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program,” concluded White-Ginder.

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program is currently funded at \$2.32 billion. Both President Barack Obama and the U.S. Senate are proposing that this level of funding be maintained for next year. To date, the U.S. House of Representatives have not acted on next year’s funding bill.

For a biography of Jeanne White-Ginder: <http://bit.ly/1pwclFF>

For a fact sheet on HIV/AIDS in the US and the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program: <http://bit.ly/1xpbxXz>

For supporting charts and graphs on HIV in the US and the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program: <http://bit.ly/1ApNMmp>

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

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