



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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**For Immediate Release: 07.20.17**

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## **HOUSE MAINTAINS FUNDING FOR MOST HIV AND HEPATITIS PROGRAMS**

*Minority AIDS Initiative Programs Proposed for Elimination & Cuts*

**Washington, DC** – Last night, the House Appropriations Committee approved the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Fiscal Year 2018 funding bill that maintains funding for most domestic HIV and hepatitis programs, however it eliminates and cuts critical programs essential to addressing HIV/AIDS, including the Minority AIDS Initiative.

“The AIDS Institute thanks the leadership of the House Appropriations Committee for continuing to fund many domestic HIV programs, especially after President Trump proposed cutting them by almost \$1 billion,” commented Carl Schmid, Deputy Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. The Committee is recommending that funding be maintained at fiscal year 2017 levels for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, CDC HIV, hepatitis, and STD Prevention programs, and in a separate bill, HUD’s Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program. “However, we are disappointed that the bill completely eliminates the HHS Secretary’s Minority AIDS Initiative Program and cuts over \$17 million from SAMHSA’s Minority AIDS Initiative programs.”

An amendment to restore the Minority AIDS Initiative funds, along with other minority health programs, was offered by Rep. Barbara Lee, but was defeated by a vote of 23 to 29.

The Subcommittee also eliminated other programs that impact people who are at risk of HIV, including the Teen Pregnancy and Prevention Program and Title X Family Planning, while at the same time increased funding for unproven abstinence-only until marriage programs. Medical research at the National Institutes of Health would be increased by \$1.1 billion. The AIDS Institute trusts that some of this increase will be dedicated to AIDS research.

“While the Subcommittee is proposing to maintain CDC Hepatitis Prevention funding at \$34 million, this amount is totally inadequate to address the growing hepatitis epidemic in the U.S.,” commented Franklin Hood, Hepatitis Policy Associate at The AIDS Institute.

There are nearly 55,000 new hepatitis transmissions each year, and the CDC estimates that between 2010 and 2015 the country saw a three-fold increase in the rate of new infections. Of the 5.3 million people living with hepatitis B and/or hepatitis C in the U.S., as many as 65 percent are not aware of their infection. Viral hepatitis remains the leading cause of liver cancer, and the number of deaths attributed to hepatitis C now surpasses the number of deaths associated with all 60 other notifiable infectious diseases combined.

“Minority communities, especially in the South, are deeply impacted by the HIV/AIDS epidemic,” said Michael Ruppal, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. “Now is not the time to eliminate or cut Minority AIDS Initiative programs, which will exacerbate health disparities occurring in minority communities. As Congress continues to craft the final FY 2018 appropriations bills, we urge them to increase non-defense discretionary spending in order to restore these cuts, along with many other worthy programs.”

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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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