The AIDS Institute Praises Florida Governor Rick Scott and Legislature for Increased Funding to AIDS Drug Assistance Program Will Help Alleviate Long Wait List to Receive Medications

Tampa, FL – The AIDS Institute applauds Florida Governor Rick Scott and the Florida legislature for increasing state funding to the Florida AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) as part of the 2012 state budget recently approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

“This is an extraordinary step forward for the healthcare of Floridians living with HIV who do not have the means to pay for medications to keep them healthy and alive,” commented Michael Ruppal, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. “We thank both the Florida legislature and Governor Scott for supporting a program that saves lives, reduces medical costs and saves tax payer dollars.”

ADAP provides life-saving medications to treat low income people with HIV/AIDS who are underinsured or uninsured throughout the country. It is funded by a combination of federal and state funds, and rebates provided by pharmaceutical companies.

The program in Florida currently serves about 12,000 people. Due to severe budget constraints and increased patient demand caused by people losing their jobs and health insurance during these tough economic times in Florida, the Florida ADAP program has had to institute wait lists for people to receive their medications. At one point last year over 4,000 Floridians were on a wait list
for this life-saving program. Due in part to increased federal dollars that number has been reduced to 427.

The $2.5 million in recurring state general revenue funds for Florida ADAP should help reduce the current wait list even more and at the same time help meet the continued increase in new patients entering the program every month.

“It’s very satisfying to see our elected officials understand the value of this program. ADAP saves Florida millions more than it contributes because it keeps patients on their medications and off Medicaid. ADAP patients can remain in Florida’s workforce and stay healthier. They are hospitalized less often, too,” said Jesse Fry, Co-chairman of Florida HIV/AIDS Advocacy Network, a program of The AIDS Institute.

“When a person is not receiving medications they run the risk of becoming sicker and often have to leave work and end up being disabled. Then they go on Medicaid, which, in the end, costs the state more in treatment costs,” Fry added.

The AIDS Institute is pleased with this increase in program support and will work closely with the Florida Department of Health to ensure that the Florida ADAP program remains flexible to consumer and patient support and a viable safety net for those with the greatest need.

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For more information and to become involved, please contact
The AIDS Institute at: (202) 835-8373, or by email at: info@theaidsinstitute.org
or www.TheAIDSInstitute.org

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