

Investing in the Health of HIV+ Americans: Stop the AIDS Drug Assistance Program Crisis

by [Elizabeth Lombino](#) · March 12, 2011

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There are thousands of HIV-positive individuals being denied life-saving medications due to budget restrictions right here in the United States. This is the ADAP crisis, and it's not getting the attention it deserves.

ADAP, or AIDS Drug Assistance Program, is a vital state program that assists HIV-positive individuals with paying for the incredibly expensive medications needed to treat and manage this devastating disease. Without these essential medications, a person's HIV disease is more likely to progress and become life-threatening.

Yet despite these critical facts, ADAP funding is being slashed in most states across the country. Thousands of HIV-positive people have been terminated from their state programs outright and thousands more are being placed on growing waiting lists. Other states have re-figured their ADAP requirements, thereby cutting many patients from their programs and putting countless others in jeopardy of losing coverage.

For a variety of reasons, our health care system and state and federal government are choosing not to invest in the health of HIV-positive individuals. By denying medications, a person living with HIV will experience a progression of her disease and a decline in her health. This does not need to happen.

In the 30-year history of HIV/AIDS, there have been incredible advancements in treatments. Now, HIV is a chronic disease. People can live long, healthy lives with HIV... *when they are on a consistent, specific and life-long medication regimen*. People can still die from complications related to HIV disease progression. Those who are at risk of dying are those who do not have access to treatment. The thousands of HIV-positive people who are currently waiting for financial assistance for their medications from their state ADAP program.

Is this truly how our nation treats those living with HIV? Okay, yes, the [tumultuous history](#) of HIV/AIDS included similar ignorance and mistreatment of those living with and at risk of contracting HIV. Yet surely our nation has grown and learned from this disastrous history, right? (I'm not naive, I'm sarcastic).

If our nation continues to treat people living with HIV/AIDS in this way, we will repeat the mistakes of the epidemic early on. We will see a resurgence in the spread of HIV. People will not seek testing as they will fear the implications of a positive result. There is already fear and stigma attached to an HIV-positive diagnosis. When we add lack of support, financial burden, lack of treatment, further stigma and discrimination, HIV/AIDS will become silent once again. As we all learned from the early years of the epidemic: silence = death.

One advocacy group, ADAP Advocacy Association ([aaa+](#)), has been working tirelessly to raise awareness and ensure that HIV/AIDS and the ADAP crisis do not become silent again. They recently released a powerful series of [public service announcements](#) to bring more national attention to this vital issue. Take a look at one of the clips [here](#):

Also join us in advocating for ADAP funding in several states around the country. We have petitions for [Florida](#), [Louisiana](#), [Virginia](#), and [Ohio](#). You can also demand [pharma](#) do their part and lower the cost of these medications. Together we can stop the ADAP Crisis in America and ensure that HIV/AIDS does not become silent again.