

National conference: When will Washington 'rescue' AIDS Drug Assistance Programs?

By [Marcos Restrepo](#) | 07.07.11 | 12:26 pm

As the [AIDS Drug Assistance Program funding crisis](#) continues, a national summit asking "When will Washington come to the rescue?" ends today in Washington, D.C.

The funding crisis prompted states to implement cost-containment measures that include waiting lists in 13 states. As of June 30, more than [8,600 people](#) (.pdf) living with HIV and AIDS are on those waiting lists. According to Florida's [Bureau of HIV/AIDS](#) (.pdf), as of June 30, Florida has over 3,500 people on its AIDS Drug Assistance Program wait list, the longest by far in the U.S.

The AIDS Drug Assistance Programs supply life-saving drugs to HIV/AIDS patients who are uninsured and/or unable to afford their medications. Waiting lists started to emerge in different states in June 2009 as a cost-containment measure to deal with a shortage in funding.

The ADAP Advocacy Association, which is hosting the D.C. summit, produced this public service announcement on the program:

#

The Advocacy Association [writes](#) (.pdf):

The purpose is to identify key action steps to secure additional federal appropriations, programmatic reforms, and available public and private resources to alleviate the ongoing cost-containment strategies that are putting thousands of people living with HIV/AIDS on ADAP wait lists or program disenrollment. #

The [Advocacy Association adds](#): "Without intervention from either the executive or legislative branch, several thousand people living with HIV/AIDS will be at risk of developing Opportunistic Infections ('OIs'), and thousands of others who are HIV-negative will be at greater risk of contracting the virus because their HIVpositive counterparts are more infectious when not taking Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy ('HAART')." #

Florida's funding crisis caught the attention of the Elton John AIDS Foundation, which in June [launched an online petition](#) to urge Gov. Rick Scott and Florida legislators to not reduce income eligibility requirements for the state's Drug Assistance Program.

Florida's Department of Health [has proposed](#) reducing income eligibility for the program from 400 percent of the federal poverty level to 200 percent. If the [bureau's proposal is adopted](#), a patient would have to earn roughly \$26,000 or less to qualify. HIV/AIDS medications cost between \$10,000 and \$20,000 per year.

[Follow Marcos Restrepo on Twitter](#)

Categories & Tags: [Government Accountability/Reform](#) | [Health Care](#) | [LGBT](#) | [Multimedia Highlights](#) | [Politics](#) | [ADAP Advocacy Association](#) | [AIDS Drug Assistance Programs](#) | [Bureau of HIV/AIDS](#) | [Elton John](#) | [Elton John AIDS Foundation](#) | [HIV/AIDS](#) | [Rick Scott](#) | [Tallahassee](#) |

[Switch to our mobile site](#)