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POLICY & POLITICS

Texas: HIV Program Loses Needed Funding Bump in Compromise

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The compromise budget announced Monday night by House and Senate leaders denies a requeste funding increase for the state AIDS Drug Assistance Program, the Texas HIV Medication Prograı (THMP).

Citing hikes in the cost of HIV medicines, the longer lifespans of HIV patients and more people ı of assistance, the Department of State Health Services had asked for a $19 million boost in THMI funding. Christina Mann, a DSHS spokesperson, said, "We'll have to make changes to the HIV medication program," possibly by toughening eligibility requirements or closing enrollment entire

Supporters of the compromise noted that THMP, unlike many other programs, did not see a fundi And they said the budget authorizes state officials to shift $19 million from Medicaid to THMP.

But Randall Ellis, a spokesperson for Legacy Community Health Services, which assists Houston HIV/AIDS patients, said the transfer provision simply means money can be moved "from one pro that is dramatically underfunded to another program that is dramatically underfunded."

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