



PRESS RELEASE

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Last Chance to Solve ADAP Crisis

The Nation Celebrates World AIDS Day with over 4,100 People on ADAP Waiting Lists as Lame Duck Nears an End

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The world prepares to celebrate World AIDS Day 2010 with over 4,100 on ADAP waiting lists. A democratic initiative has spurred a bicameral ADAP working group to address the crisis facing ADAPs nation wide, but members of Congress must keep in mind that this is time sensitive. Congress will need to act rapidly to correct the issue of dramatic federal underfunding of ADAP, before the lame duck session comes to a close and HIV infected individuals on waiting lists are forced to wait until Congress resumes in 2011 for necessary life saving medications.

“For over a year we have been warning Congress and the President that the federal government’s underfunding of the AIDS Drug Assistance Program would lead to dire consequences,” commented William Arnold, Executive Director of the Community Access National Network. “It is time for Congress to act. If a decision cannot be made before legislators leave for the holiday recess, countless more people will be on waiting lists by the time they return. We have been warning the Congress that if this underfunding continues, more people will be placed on the waiting list and fatalities may be an unavoidable result. It is time they heeded our warnings and alleviate the financial burden that is impacting over 4,000 Americans.”

Congressman Maurice Hinchey, from New York’s 22nd district, who sits on the House Appropriations Committee, has been a champion for increasing ADAP’s budget. “The New York congressional delegation has requested ADAP Emergency Supplemental Appropriations in the budget process on several occasions in the last few years,” noted Congressman Hinchey. “The federal share’s drop from 70% of total ADAP expenditure to today’s share of less than 50% transfers a fiscal burden back to the state level. Between 2000 and 2008, states increased the amount dedicated to ADAP by 150%, while the federal share has only increased 47% in the same amount of time. This burden on a state like New York - the national epicenter for the AIDS epidemic - is unbearable as it is in many states in the current recession generated State revenue and budget crisis. We saw the ADAP crisis coming years ago, but have been slow to respond. Now the specter of 5,000 – 6,000 HIV+ ADAP Patients is upon us.”

The racial and ethnic minority population has also been hard hit by ADAP’s underfunding. Congresswoman Donna Christensen, from the U.S. Virgin Islands, chairs the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust and has consistently fought for additional funding for ADAP. “Many advocates and members of Congress have been warning of the ADAP crisis for some years,” remarked Congresswoman Christensen. “Eighty House Members wrote and asked President Obama to support \$126 Million in emergency supplement funds in April of this year. Unfortunately, we were not successful and, as a result, thousands of innocent Americans – a disproportionate number of who are racial and ethnic minorities – sit on waiting lists across the country.” Concluded the Congresswoman, “I am very concerned that unless this situation changes, we are likely to celebrate world AIDS Day 2010 with well over 4,500 HIV+ US residents on ADAP waiting lists; a situation that is wholly unacceptable!”

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This public information relayed in the public interest.