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Senate Takes Action on ADAP Crisis
S 3401 "The ACCESS ADAP Act"

North Carolina and Oklahoma Senators Take Lead on Solving Crisis

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Community Access National Network (CANN) commends Senator Richard Burr (NC) and Senator Tom Coburn (OK) for their leadership in solving the ongoing AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) crisis. The ACCESS ADAP Act, introduced in the Senate on Monday, provides \$126 million to ADAP for the remainder of fiscal year 2010 to address the immediate need of individuals on waiting lists, to prevent these lists from expanding to more states, and to recover every patient who has been taken off their comprehensive drug regimen.

"More than 600 North Carolinians living with HIV/AIDS have been waiting to access their needed prescription drugs through ADAP. Patients waiting to enroll in ADAP in North Carolina and around our nation are in need of our leadership here in Washington," stated Senator Burr, a member of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. "This bill will ensure that Congress keeps its promise to these patients in need."

The money for ADAP is stipulated to be allocated from unobligated discretionary funds in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Department of Health and Human Services alone received a specific \$22 billion in discretionary authority to be obligated through September of 2010. This discretionary funding is to be used for improving and preserving health care as well as promoting prevention and wellness.

"At a time when waiting lists are growing with no end in sight and these patients no longer have access to their life-saving drugs through ADAP, there couldn't be a more appropriate funding stream to deal with the preservation of healthcare and the promotion of these individual's wellness," commented William Arnold, Executive Director of CANN. "Keeping folks alive is stimulus."

Two of every three patients using ADAP services are minorities and one of every two fall beneath the federal poverty level. The bill will ensure that ADAP is able to follow through on administering life-saving medications to uninsured and underinsured HIV/AIDS patients enrolled in the Ryan White program. To date, multiple patients on the waiting list have died while their access to ADAP has been denied.