



## Kaiser Daily HIV/AIDS Report

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### Drug Access

### **Nevada AIDS Advocates Warn State Might Institute ADAP Waiting List Because of Funding Shortfall**

The Nevada AIDS Drug Assistance Program might have to institute a waiting list for the program because of a potential funding shortfall, AIDS advocates in the state are warning, the *Las Vegas Sun* reports (Ball, *Las Vegas Sun*, 2/2). ADAPs are federal- and state-funded programs that provide HIV/AIDS-related medications to low-income, uninsured and underinsured HIV-positive individuals. President Bush in June 2004 ordered the immediate release of \$20 million to purchase AIDS-related drugs for states with ADAP waiting lists at that time, which did not include Nevada (*Kaiser Daily HIV/AIDS Report*, 1/14). Gov. Kenny Guinn's (R) proposed budget does not include an increase in state funding for the program, despite requests for more money from the *Nevada Health Division*, the *AP/San Francisco Chronicle* reports. The agency asked for \$4.5 million for the program over the next two fiscal years, but the governor's budget proposal keeps funding at the current level of \$2.7 million, according to the *AP/Chronicle*. The program also receives about \$6 million in federal funds (*AP/San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/2). Last year, the program had a \$925,000 shortfall and had to seek emergency funds from the Clark County Ryan White Planning Council to continue operation, according to the state health division, the *Sun* reports. The ADAP's state funding has not increased since it began in 1997, despite increases in the number of HIV/AIDS patients living in Nevada, Dr. Jerry Cade, director of HIV services at the *University Medical Center* in Las Vegas, said, the *Sun* reports. About 870 HIV-positive Nevadans currently receive antiretroviral drugs through the program, and an estimated 220 additional people are expected to need help over the next two years, according to Martha Framsted, a health division spokesperson. In addition to an estimated 9% annual increase in the number of AIDS cases, the price of medications also is expected to increase by about 6% annually, according to the *Sun*.

### **Waiting List Possibility**

Although Nevada's ADAP currently does not have a waiting list, some believe a funding shortfall would force the state to create one, the *Sun* reports. Such a waiting list could restrict patients' access to antiretroviral drugs, which could be "dangerous," according to the *Sun*. "The key to treating this disease in this day and age is to keep people on their meds," Cade said (*Las Vegas Sun*, 2/2). "Aside from what (the state funding shortfall) does to these people, it is not cost-effective," Cade said, adding, "They are unable to work, and they take up a lot more resources." Greg Bortolin, a Guinn spokesperson, said that if a funding increase is "important enough," the Legislature will include an increase in the budget, according to the *AP/Chronicle* (*AP/San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/2).