

Statement of the HIV Medicine Association and the Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition On Implementation of the Debt Ceiling Agreement

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Congress has outlined a framework for enacting major cuts to the federal budget over the next decade that could have far reaching consequences for people living with, and at risk for, HIV infection here and abroad.

We urge members of Congress to seriously consider the human impact of the funding and policy decisions that they will be making in the coming months.

This year remarkable scientific advances have offered a clear path to make real headway against HIV disease in the U.S. and around the world. We now have the tools to end the pandemic but are stymied in our ability to apply them on the frontlines where they are urgently needed. We know that access to HIV care and treatment not only saves the life of the individual with HIV infection but also reduces HIV transmission by 96 percent. Yet only 50 percent of people with HIV in the U.S have reliable access to HIV treatment, and as many as 15 million people in developing countries wait for access to lifesaving therapy.

As funding decisions are made that will chart our country's course for many years to come, we urge Congress to prioritize investments critical to individual and public health. We must take an equitable and balanced approach to deficit reduction that incorporates revenue generation, does not disproportionately rely on non-security discretionary spending cuts, supports biomedical research, protects vulnerable populations, such as people with HIV disease, and maintains a strong federal commitment to the Medicaid and Medicare programs.

A retreat in the battle against HIV disease will be costly whether measured in lives lost or federal dollars. As the deficit reduction process moves forward, we urge members of Congress to consider the impact of their decisions on people with HIV disease and other medically vulnerable populations.

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The HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) is the professional home for more than 4,600 physicians, scientists, and other health care professionals dedicated to the field of HIV/AIDS. Nested within the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), HIVMA promotes quality in HIV care and advocates policies that ensure a comprehensive and humane response to the AIDS pandemic informed by science and social justice. For more information, visit www.hivma.org.

The Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition (RWMPC) was formed in 2006 to be a voice for medical providers across the nation delivering quality care to their patients through Part C of the Ryan White program. Ryan White Part C funds comprehensive HIV care and treatment-the services that are directly responsible for the dramatic decreases in AIDS-related mortality and morbidity over the last decade. We speak for those who often cannot speak for themselves, and we advocate for a full range of primary care services for this unique population. We have a broad and diverse membership that represents highly qualified medical professionals and administrators who are Part C grantees across the nation. RWMPC is sponsored by HIVMA.