

National Policy Office - Washington, DC: 202-835-8373
Program and Administrative Office - Tampa, FL: 813-258-5929

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Media Contact: Carl Schmid: (202) 669-8267 cschmid@theaidsinstitute.org

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S BUDGET MAINTAINS STRONG COMMITMENT TO DOMESTIC HIV/AIDS PROGRAMS

Proposes Increases for Care, Medications and Prevention

Washington, DC – “The budget President Obama outlined today yet again demonstrates his strong commitment to ending HIV by increasing funding for prevention and lifesaving care and treatment for those who cannot afford it in the United States,” commented Carl Schmid, Deputy Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. “President Obama recognizes the importance of the federal government’s role in addressing infectious diseases, such as HIV, and the need to provide care and treatment to people with HIV/AIDS to keep them healthy and reduce new infections. We now urge Congress to show the same level of support as it considers federal spending priorities for the upcoming year,” continued Schmid.

Under the President’s budget, funding for the Ryan White AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) would increase by \$102 million over FY12 appropriated levels for a total of \$1 billion. According to the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD), there are currently 4,118 people on ADAP waiting lists in 12 states and over 445 people in six states who have been disenrolled from the program due to budget constraints and growing enrollment. Every month an average of 2,710 new people, or over 32,500 people annually, enroll into ADAP. Recognizing the severe funding shortage and the importance of providing medications to people with HIV/AIDS, on World AIDS Day this past December, President Obama announced an additional \$35 million for ADAP. The proposed budget released today continues that funding into FY13 and increases it by \$67 million to address the waitlists and growing caseloads.

The President is also proposing an increase of \$20 million for Part C of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program to fund primary care for people with HIV/AIDS. On World AIDS Day, President Obama also announced \$15 million more for Part C. The Ryan White Program provides care and treatment to over 550,000 low-income people with HIV/AIDS and has struggled to keep up with increased patient caseloads.

The AIDS Institute is concerned that the President is proposing to decrease by \$8 million funding to Part D of the Ryan White Program which funds programs for Children, Youth, Women, and Families. The AIDS Institute will work with the Congress to reverse this more than 10% cut.

In order to help achieve the goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy to reduce the number of new HIV infections, which now stands at over 50,000 per year, the President is proposing to increase HIV funding at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) by \$40 million. This funding will help the CDC focus on the areas and communities most impacted by HIV, including African-Americans and gay men of all races and ethnicities, by increasing testing programs and linking people to care.

As part of the increase for HIV prevention, the budget restores the \$10 million cut to HIV Adolescent and School Health. That cut initiated by the Congress in FY12 amounted to a loss of 25% of its budget. The CDC reports that young people aged 13–29 accounted for 39% of all new HIV infections in 2009.

Medical research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) would remain flat funded. “This is surprising given the recognition President Obama has given to the recent monumental advances in biomedical prevention research conducted by the NIH and the need for continued prevention research, including on vaccines and new drug therapies,” commented Spencer Lieb, The AIDS Institute’s HIV/AIDS Research Coordinator.

Under the President’s proposed budget, the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program at HUD, which provides housing for low income people with AIDS, would receive \$330 million, a decrease of \$2 million. While The AIDS Institute is concerned with the reduced funding level, we are highly supportive of the Administration’s proposal to distribute HOPWA funding based on HIV cases adjusted for fair market rent and poverty rates, rather than the current outdated formula that distributes funding based on cumulative AIDS cases.

Funding for Hepatitis Prevention at the CDC would remain at approximately \$30 million.

In keeping with the Administration’s policy of following the science of HIV prevention, the President’s budget rejects the imposition of the federal funding ban of syringe exchange programs, a scientifically proven method to prevent HIV and other blood borne infections, while not increasing drug use. Additionally, the budget rejects discretionary funding of failed abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. Both of these harmful policies were resurrected last year at the insistence of the House of Representatives.

“The President has put forth a federal budget that seeks to restore fiscal responsibility while investing in some key areas, including HIV/AIDS programs,” commented Michael Ruppal, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. “Now it is up to the Congress, which may have differing views on how to address federal spending and closing the budget deficit. Whatever path is taken, it is critical that programs of public health significance, including HIV/AIDS, are adequately funded. This summer when the International AIDS Conference will be held in Washington DC, the eyes of the world will be on the U.S. to see if we are adequately addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. President Obama has shown leadership by developing a National HIV/AIDS Strategy and bolstering it with the dollars to implement it. We hope the Congress will follow his lead,” Ruppal concluded.

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The AIDS Institute is a national nonprofit organization that promotes action for social change through public policy research, advocacy and education.

For more information and to become involved in AIDS advocacy work, please contact The AIDS Institute at: (202) 835-8373, or by email at:

Info@theaidsinstitute.org or www.TheAIDSInstitute.org