Health Care for People With HIV in Grave Danger

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We've been saying for months that the current AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) crisis is but the tip of the iceberg. The number of people on ADAP waiting lists has grown to 8,506 people in 13 states at press time (remember, this doesn't account for all those who just got booted out of ADAP altogether because of hastily applied and all-too-handy changes in Medicaid eligibility requirements). And baby, we ain't seen nothing yet. Especially if Congress cuts back on Medicaid benefits. Think of this: While 200,000 people with HIV in the United States depend on ADAP, at least another 200,000 people with HIV rely on Medicaid for their care. That number could skyrocket. In 2014, when the Affordable Care Act kicks in, many people on ADAP will be shifted to Medicaid. At the same time, we may finally start testing more people for HIV and, as a result, find more of the 20 percent of Americans estimated to be living with HIV who don't know it. Can you imagine what those two things will do to the system? Not a problem, as long as Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act stay in place. It's time to set political preferences aside and fight for our lives. Do you know your senators and representatives? Now is the time to make their acquaintance. Call 'em. Let them know you won't die without a fight.

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