On The March!

POZ’s C2EA countdown

June 1, 2005 By Josh Sparber

HIVer Susan Howe, 60, is rowdier than most retired nurses: The minister’s daughter is trying to save Pittsburgh’s endangered Housing Opportunities for PWAs (HOPWA), the agency that helps her pay rent. She’s petitioning legislators, and in October, she’ll march on Washington in the Campaign to End AIDS (C2EA; visit www.endaidsnow.org). If money is tight, Howe says fight.

Why are you marching?
Since I’m an AIDS patient, how can I not? We shouldn’t be cutting PWA housing to run a war.

How would housing cuts affect you?
If Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Penn.) cuts HOPWA funding as proposed, I and many Pittsburgh AIDS patients will be in the streets.

Can you afford to get to the march?
On supplemental security income (SSI), I get $579 a month and Medicaid. I’ll join the planned cross-country caravan or drive up by myself.

How can poor folks get to DC?
Everyone lives in a federally funded Ryan White region; you could ask your local coalition for funding. Beyond that, people should ask local AIDS service organizations, corporations and churches to fund their trip.

How have you won HIVer rights?
We won housing priority for PWAs by repeatedly writing letters and embarrassing authorities into doing the right thing. I present myself so that I can’t be dismissed. Other advocates call me the bulldog.

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