NY Center for Homeless Gay Youth Saved From Closure

December 11, 2008

A Manhattan drop-in center that provides HIV prevention and treatment services to gay, homeless youths—a high-risk group for infection—will no longer be forced to shut down after city officials restored its funding, The Associated Press (AP) reports.

In September, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene told the Ali Forney Center it that it would not be renewing its $600,000 in annual funding. City officials said that those funds should be redirected toward housing for people living with HIV/AIDS as opposed to the drop-in center's outreach and case management services. Politicians such as Rep. Jerrold Nadler and state Sen. Tom Duane led a rallying cry against that decision.

"Difficult choices have to made in these tough times," the health department's Monica Sweeney, MD, MPH, said of the initial decision to reallocate the center's funding. "No one or any program or any sector is going to be spared during the meltdown."

According to the article, AIDS service providersand local government officials voted recently to continue funding for the center, which will come from federal Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Relief Emergency (CARE) grants.

This year alone, the Ali Forney Center's drop-in location tested more than 200 people from ages 16 to 24 for HIV; connected more than 50 HIV-positive youths and young adults with medical care and housing and served more than 10,000 meals, said Carl Sicilliano, the center's executive director.

"These kids are grossly underserved in this city," Siciliano told the AP. "Their existence is a struggle for survival. We are the best ally and support they have. To have taken that away from them would have been cruel and reckless."

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