Funding Cutbacks Shutter California ASO in Bay Area

June 3, 2009

After providing 25 years of comprehensive services to low-income and homeless clients living with HIV in California's Bay Area, Vital Life Services was forced to close last month because of cuts in federal support and decreased funding from private donors and foundations, *The Oakland Tribune* reports.

According to Michelle Roland, chief of the Office of AIDS in the California Department of Public Health, an increasing number of AIDS service organizations (ASOs) in the state will struggle to keep their doors open because of a proposed $80.1 million budget cut for HIV/AIDS services that is going through the state legislature. The reduction includes a $12.3 million cut from the state's AIDS drug assistance program (ADAP), which provides medication and treatment to low-income patients.

Kurt Zimmerman, a founder of Vital Life Services, is concerned for the care center's 400 clients and isn't sure where they will receive their critical support. "We're talking hundreds of lives here," Zimmerman told *The Oakland Tribune*. "The fallout is tremendous."

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