This Governor Plans to Slash $4.8M From State HIV/AIDS Investments

The cuts could derail the “ambitious but achievable goal” of eliminating HIV transmission by 2020.

January 30, 2017

Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker has proposed cutting $4.8 million from the state’s HIV/AIDS investments in prevention, education and outreach as part of the budget for fiscal year 2018, reports Mass Live.

In total, the governor’s proposal is for a $40.5 billion budget, an increase of $1.6 billion from the current fiscal year. Despite the $4.8 million cut, the state will still invest $28.3 million in its HIV/AIDS efforts.

“This recommendation, which follows a $900,000 [midyear] cut to the current fiscal year’s budget, signals a dangerous retreat by the state on efforts to fully eradicate HIV transmission in Massachusetts,” said Carl Sciortino, executive director of AIDS Action Committee, a statewide provider of HIV/AIDS services, in a statement.

Sciortino points out that thanks to past investments in HIV treatment education and outreach, the state is nearing its goal of eliminating HIV transmissions by 2020 by ensuring that 90 percent of people living with HIV are aware of their status, that 90 percent of those diagnosed with the virus are receiving treatment and that 90 percent of those on treatment are virally suppressed.

“That ambitious—but achievable—goal will not be met without investment, support and partnership from the state, which is not in evidence with this budget recommendation,” said Sciortino. “In Massachusetts, those who are living with HIV and those who are most vulnerable to infection—Black and Latino men and women; gay and bisexual men; transgender men and women; people who are homeless, particularly young people; and those who are incarcerated—are some of our most vulnerable residents. Unnecessarily prolonging their vulnerability to HIV is cruel, and asking them to bear the burden of budget reductions is unfair, immoral and unjust.”

Baker’s proposed budget is just a starting point. Committees from the House and Senate will negotiate on the final budget, which must be signed by the governor before the start of the 2018 fiscal year, which is July 1, 2017.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/governor-plans-slash-48m-state-hiv-aids-investments