Why Did People With HIV in Dallas See Delays in Treatment?

"This is life or death. This is unacceptable."

April 9, 2018 By Trent Straube

Nearly 9,000 people living with HIV in Dallas may have experienced delays in treatment and health services because of "mismanagement and incompetence" within the Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS), reports The Dallas Morning News.

The DCHHS receives about $17 million a year in funding from the federal Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, which it funnels to about a dozen nonprofits that provide services and treatment to those eligible for financial help. Ryan White programs serve the HIV population that is uninsured or underinsured; that includes about 9,000 folks in Dallas.

Last month, federal regulators on a routine visit noticed 32 areas of concern within the DCHHS and suggested that the program required "immediate changes." For example, they found that the DCHHS staff "had a general disconnect" from their duties, the newspaper reports.

The problems have led to delays in services, with people waiting weeks for their medications and nonprofits waiting months for contracts on grants, which resulted in day-to-day budget problems.

"This is life or death," County Commissioner John Wiley Price told the paper. "There are people in this community whose lives depend on us. This is unacceptable."

Price said part of the problem lies in County Judge Clay Jenkins, who appoints the members of the Ryan White Planning Council. Jenkins hinted that a toxic work environment at DCHHS was at fault.

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