



DeSantis Puts Tens of Thousands of Lives at Risk by Gutting Florida's AIDS Drug Assistance Program

"Floridians living with HIV will suffer," warns AIDS United in a statement that also lays out five actions the state must take right now.

January 14, 2026 By [AIDS United](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – AIDS United strongly condemns the Florida Department of Health's decision, under Governor Ron DeSantis' administration, to decimate Florida's AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) by slashing eligibility from 400% to 130% of the federal poverty level, ending support that helps clients purchase health insurance, and removing the most-prescribed HIV treatment regimen from the program's formulary. These actions will rip lifesaving medications away from Floridians living with HIV, increase new HIV transmissions, and drive up long-term health care costs across the state.

According to data from the forthcoming 2026 National RWHAP Part B ADAP Monitoring Project Annual Report, Florida's ADAP serves more than 30,000 enrollees, and roughly half of those enrollees make over 139% of the federal poverty level. That means this proposal would leave over half of current participants without coverage and with few realistic options to maintain uninterrupted access to treatment.

Florida's rationale, that rising premiums require abrupt cuts, fails the basic test of public health and common sense. The state is effectively pushing people out of coverage while acknowledging the same affordability crisis that will make it harder for those individuals to replace insurance or pay for medications out-of-pocket. Even more alarming: this rollout reportedly provides less than two months' notice, and it is being announced just days before the end of the Affordable Care Act open enrollment period, when many people would need immediate support to navigate coverage changes.

Florida's decision is also happening in the context of broader health system destabilization: recent Medicaid cuts and disruptions to federal HIV programs in 2025 have already strained the care continuum nationwide. We are watching prevention infrastructure fray, clinics and community organizations forced to scale back, and the resulting damage ripple across testing, PrEP access, linkage to care, and viral suppression. Florida's move compounds that harm, at the exact moment when stability is the difference between progress and resurgence.

Florida is already among the states hardest hit by HIV. Year after year, the state ranks among the highest in new HIV diagnoses, with an estimated new diagnosis rate of 16.7 per 100,000, and Ending the HIV Epidemic counties like Miami-Dade experiencing substantially higher rates, about 33.3 per 100,000. Cutting ADAP this deeply in a state with this epidemiological profile is not “cost containment.” It is a recipe for more infections, more hospitalizations, and more preventable deaths.

“Governor DeSantis’ administration is choosing ideology and austerity over human life. Slashing ADAP eligibility from 400% to 130% of poverty, ending insurance support, and stripping the most commonly prescribed HIV treatment from the formulary will cause immediate harm. It will result in missed doses, treatment interruption, avoidable illness, and increased transmission. This is not just cruel; it is fiscally reckless. The state will pay more later in uncompensated care, hospitalizations, and new infections. First, however, Floridians living with HIV will suffer. Florida must reverse these changes immediately and provide full transparency on the budget decisions driving this crisis,” said Carl Baloney Jr., President and CEO of AIDS United.

AIDS United calls on Governor DeSantis and the Florida Department of Health to take the following actions immediately:

- Reverse the proposed eligibility cuts and maintain ADAP coverage that reflects real-world need for low- and moderate-income Floridians living with HIV.
- Restore insurance premium and cost-sharing support that keeps people insured and adherent to care.
- Maintain a clinically appropriate formulary, including the most-prescribed HIV regimens, guided by medical expertise, not political or budgetary expediency.
- Provide full public transparency on ADAP funding sources, expenditures, rebate utilization, and the claimed shortfall, especially given the lack of public budget detail since mid-2024 despite stakeholder requests.
- Guarantee a meaningful transition plan with adequate time, clear navigation support, and safeguards to prevent treatment interruption and loss of viral suppression.

For 35 years, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program has been the backbone of care for low-income uninsured and underinsured people living with HIV, saving lives, reducing transmissions, and preventing avoidable costs to hospitals and state systems. Florida's ADAP overhaul threatens to unravel decades of progress and undermine the basic dignity every person deserves: consistent access to lifesaving care.

[This statement](#) was originally published January 14, 2026, by AIDS United.

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