HIV Groups Deeply Concerned About the Human Costs of Health Care Cuts

July 23, 2011 By David Ernesto Munar

Twelve prominent HIV/AIDS advocacy groups -- the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, AIDS United, amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, the HIV Medicine Association, the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition, the National Minority AIDS Council, Partners in Health, Project Inform, the Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, the Treatment Access Expansion Project, and the Treatment Action Group -- call on President Obama and congressional leaders to consider the impact on vulnerable populations, including people living with HIV/AIDS, of deficit reduction plans requiring hundreds of billions in funding cuts for health care and human services.

The groups urge policymakers to protect people with HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable populations through an equitable approach that balances revenue increases and spending reductions.

The stakes in this debate could not be higher for people with HIV/AIDS. Recent research findings from the National Institutes of Health show that effective HIV treatment not only saves the life of the individual with HIV but also significantly reduces HIV transmission. The proposed deep cuts to health care programs, including Medicaid and Medicare, would come at a time when the nation should be doubling efforts to improve HIV prevention and diagnosis and access to HIV care in order to pave the way for long-term savings and an end to the HIV pandemic.

Massive health care cuts will cost us more over the long-term when it comes to HIV disease. We now have the tools to keep people with HIV healthy and make real headway in curbing new HIV infections, but cuts of the size being considered will cripple our ability to put science into practice. Serious cuts to Medicaid would undermine implementation of health reform and make it impossible to achieve the worthy goals of the Administration’s National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

We are at a pivotal time in the battle against HIV disease. Our country and people with HIV/AIDS cannot afford significant health care cuts. Congress and the President must consider the impact of their decisions on people with HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable populations now and for years to come.

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