Trump’s Budget for FY 2018 Proposes Draconian Cuts

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May 23, 2017 By AIDS United

The following is AIDS United’s statement on President Trump’s budget for FY 2018.

AIDS United is shocked by President Trump’s Fiscal Year 2018 budget request released today. It threatens to roll back the progress in the fight against the domestic HIV epidemic. Now more than ever we must maintain and strengthen our progress towards our national goals and priorities of reducing new HIV infections, increasing access to care and improving health outcomes for people living with HIV, and reducing HIV-related health disparities.

The deep proposed cuts to domestic HIV and STD prevention cannot be reconciled with the goal of preventing new HIV transmissions and the rising rates of STDs. The proposed $59 million cut to the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, coupled with a fundamental restructuring of the Medicaid program capping federal spending for the first time to the tune of a $610 million funding reduction over the next decade, diminishes every community’s ability to deliver quality health care to people living with HIV by eliminating AIDS Education and Training Centers and Special Programs of National Significance (SPNS).

“AIDS Education and Training Centers (AETCs) are essential to the HIV care continuum and the success of the national goals and priorities to end the epidemic,” said AIDS United president & CEO Jesse Milan Jr. “AETCs assure that providers know and apply the best standards of care for people living with and at risk for HIV.”

Further, AIDS United is particularly concerned that the President’s budget eliminates SPNS and reduces funding for Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI) programs. SPNS and MAI programs address the HIV epidemic by developing targeted, innovative approaches to reach chronically underserved people.

“Investment in targeted approaches are effective and save money, at a time when 1 in 2 and 1 in 4 Black and Latino gay and bisexual men respectively are at substantial risk for HIV infection in their lifetime. How can we reduce funding to programs that address these disparities? The President’s budget isn’t just a set of numbers, it’s a disturbing statement of values. Every voter must send their own message to Congress to express that they value the health of our people,” said Milan.

AIDS United urges Congress to reject the draconian cuts proposed in the President’s budget request and support funding for Medicaid, HIV programs, and STD prevention. Congress cannot idly allow the return of reduced, sequester discretionary spending caps for fiscal year 2018. These restrictive caps must be raised so that non-defense discretionary programs, which include HIV programs, can be adequately funded in fiscal year 2018. A bipartisan budget agreement that provides relief from the sequester spending caps while preserving parity between defense and non-defense discretionary programs must be achieved for 2018.

“The president’s budget would turn back the clock for years and years on progress to end the HIV epidemic. We call on Congress to keep the country moving forward,” said Milan.

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