December 1st, 2006

The Honorable Bill Frist
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Frist and Minority Leader Reid:

The American Academy of HIV Medicine represents 2000 HIV specialists and the 340,000 HIV patients that they serve.

As the House only has six days before its last day of voting for this session on December 6th, AAHIVM urges the Senate leadership—as well as the New York and New Jersey delegations with holds on the current bill—to reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act to avoid calamitous funding disruptions to California, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Washington and the District of Columbia.

As you are likely aware, those jurisdictions under current law will lose heavy percentages of their awards in FY’07 (beginning next March) because their HIV surveillance data will not be recognized for the purposes of formula awards. While there may be efforts to protect these states from heavy funding losses, the current bill structure and funding allocations would negate these efforts. HRSA estimates that $72 million would be needed to hold those states harmless yet the supplemental mechanism to buttress those losses was funded at only $24 million in FY’06.

Such funding disruptions to those states and the patients they serve are indefensible.

Amending the current proposal from a five-year authorization to a three-year authorization would assuage the overwhelming majority of concerns advocates have raised about the bill. Given there are no other viable amendment options that could be adequately vetted and debated within six days, nor is there any other available vehicle with which to attach Ryan White reauthorization, we urge you to move the Ryan White Treatment Modernization Act now for the sake of the patients that will be egregiously harmed were this bill not to pass.

With deep concern,

Jeff Schouten, MD
National Board Chair
Seattle, WA
AAHIVM

Mike Wong, MD
Chair, Public Policy Comm.
Boston, MA
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Jerry Cade, MD
Founding Member
Las Vegas, NY
AAHIVM

cc: The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
The Honorable Frank Luntenberg
The Honorable Robert Menendez
The Honorable Charles Schumer