Ryan White CARE Act Reauthorization
Fact Sheet
March 2nd, 2006

People from around the country have been contacting their AIDS service organizations wondering about the status of reauthorizing the Ryan White CARE Act. The fact that the CARE Act has technically “expired” though is still being funded is understandably confusing to people. This fact sheet is intended to update anyone who is interested on how reauthorization is going with simple facts and information about where we are and what to expect. This fact sheet will be updated and distributed roughly once a month until the CARE Act is reauthorized.

The CARE Act is expired yet still being funded.
- The CARE Act was last reauthorized in 2000 for a period of 5 years, which ended on September 30, 2005. The Ryan White CARE Act is highly popular among those in Congress and continues to receive funding. It is in no danger of ending.
- In the development and maintenance of the laws which it creates, Congress has two main functions: authorization and appropriations. Authorization is the writing and regular “updating” of law. Appropriations are the dollar amount that Congress annually grants to these programs. Though technically improper, Congress regularly appropriates money to programs that have expired, with the understanding that they will be reauthorized as soon as possible.
- To do all of the business before it, Congress divides up its work by committee, in which only a fraction of the members are involved. For example, most of the members working on Ryan White reauthorization are different from “appropriators,” the members who “write the checks” for Ryan White and other programs each year. Advocates must communicate regularly with members of both committees to effectively advocate on behalf of the CARE Act.

White House / Administration involvement
- Last June, the White House through the Secretary of Health and Human Services released a set of “principles” for reauthorization. These principles were general in scope and were presented to Congress as suggested guidelines for updating the CARE Act. For more information, please go to http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2005pres/ryanwhite.html

Bi-cameral / Bi-partisan Congressional Committee process
- Though the Bush Administration publicly announced their principles, it is the job of Congress to write and pass legislation. The principles are not law and are not binding. They only reflect the Administration’s opinion about where Congress should focus when they look at reauthorization.
- Instead of working separately on their own versions of the bill, the staffs of these two committees are working together, Republicans and Democrats (bipartisan) from both the House and the Senate (bicameral) on language for a bill in closed-door meetings. They have not released any draft language to indicate what they are considering to date.
- To get input from outside, Senate staff hosted a listening session in early 2005 for advocacy groups to present their position papers for reauthorizing Ryan White. On
January 19th of 2006, Congressional staff from both the House and Senate hosted a second listening session, in which they asked interested groups to specifically present their reactions to the President’s Principles for reauthorization.

Recent notable events
- On February 28th, Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) introduced “The Ryan White CARE Act Amendments of 2006. Although Sen. Coburn is not on the committee that is reauthorizing the CARE Act, any Senator may introduce legislation at any time. Sen. Coburn decided to introduce his own bill since he feels the bi-partisan, bi-cameral process has been slow in drafting a bill.
- On March 1st, the Senate HELP Committee held a hearing on reauthorization, at which there was only one witness asked to testify—the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Elizabeth Duke.
- Dr. Duke testified in support of the Administration’s principles and pledged to work with the committee to find common ground. Senators Enzi (R-WY), Kennedy (D-MA), Burr (R-NC), Clinton (D-NY) and Sessions (R-AL) all asked questions. The Senators’ questions and Dr. Duke’s answers indicate that there continues to be real difficulties in finding agreement on how to determine formulas and allocations that might be included in a reauthorization bill. For a transcript of the hearing, please go here: http://www.aahivm.org/transcript_ryan_white_hearing.pdf

Getting more information
- Attached is a resource list of AIDS organizations and coalitions who are working on CARE Act reauthorization and are a good source of information. Many of them have developed their own recommendations for what the renewed bill should look like. Some have grassroots networks and listers you can join so that you receive alerts and updates as reauthorization moves forward.
- If you want to make sure that you get this fact sheet as it is updated, send an email to action@projectinform.org with “Ryan White” in the subject field. You will be sent only these fact sheets until the CARE Act is reauthorized.

This fact sheet was produced by the Ryan White Reauthorization Workgroup of the Federal AIDS Policy Partnership (FAPP). Please use this form in any way you deem fit for your audience.

For questions on this Fact Sheet or on the Workgroup, please contact any of the three co-chairs:

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