November 25, 2014

Dear STAFFER NAME:

The Ryan White Work Group (Work Group) is a coalition of national, local and community-based service providers and HIV/AIDS organizations that represent HIV medical providers, public health professionals and organizations, Ryan White Program (RWP) grantees and subgrantees, community-based advocates and people living with HIV/AIDS. Today, organizations affiliated with the Work Group are writing to urge the robust continuation of the RWP. The coalition is committed to ensuring that the RWP continues to support access to comprehensive and effective primary care and treatment and support services to uninsured and underinsured individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

Given that Affordable Care Act (ACA)’s health care coverage expansion is just beginning, and nearly half of the states continue to reject Medicaid expansion, the undersigned members of the community have agreed that the Ryan White Program should not be reauthorized until more is known about the impact of the ACA on access to care for low income people with HIV. We should wait to see whether Marketplace plans and State Medicaid Services are able to provide services to individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Waiting to reauthorize also would allow for data collection that would inform us about the impact of health care reform on people who receive services through the RWP. Therefore, at this time, we do not support any currently-introduced legislation that would aim to reauthorize or alter the current law guiding the Ryan White Program.

We now have the tools to end AIDS due to the dramatic advances in the prevention and treatment of the disease. First and foremost, peer-reviewed research confirmed that people with HIV live longer and healthier lives when they consistently adhere to the HIV care and treatment required to sustain an undetectable HIV viral load. Additionally, studies have proven that an undetectable viral load significantly reduces the risk of HIV transmission to near zero, demonstrating definitively that one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of the disease is to expand and support access to care and treatment. Combined with proven prevention strategies for people at high risk for infection, we can now stop the HIV epidemic.

The RWP has and will continue to play a critical role in our domestic response to HIV by supporting the care, treatment and supportive services necessary for many people living with HIV to fully realize the benefits of treatment. More than three quarters of RWP clients in HIV care and treatment are virally suppressed on account of antiretroviral medications and the comprehensive care and services they receive.
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through the RWP. This rate is approximately three-times the rate of viral suppression among all people living with HIV in the U.S. These outcomes are achieved significantly in part because the RWP is uniquely able to integrate medical and nonmedical services that support access and adherence to effective HIV treatment.

The HIV community and all levels of Ryan White grantees have begun to consider how the RWP should adapt to best leverage the current opportunity to end the AIDS epidemic. The RWP’s important role as a safety net for vulnerable people living with HIV needs to be preserved, especially in the many states where the Medicaid expansion has not been implemented. In addition, RWP providers have created an expert and effective HIV/AIDS service infrastructure where none existed before. It is essential to preserve this expertise and capacity in order to effectively serve people living with HIV and to end the AIDS epidemic.

With these goals in mind, continued robust funding for the RWP remains critical. There was no sunset provision in the most recent (2009) program reauthorization, so Congress can and has continued to appropriate funding for the RWP without interruption. Disruptions in funding would directly harm those living with HIV who require ready access to affordable and effective HIV care and treatment.

Prior to ACA implementation, more than two-thirds of RWP clients had some kind of health care coverage, including traditional Medicaid and Medicare. Now, the coverage completion services provided by the RWP and its model of delivering care are necessary in order to properly care for and treat people living with HIV and to support the services that facilitate adherence to care and treatment protocols. Maintaining and funding the RWP will continue to be vitally important for individuals with health coverage to fully address their medical needs.

RWP service providers are critical to ensuring that clients who are eligible for new insurance coverage in their states are able to access this coverage and receive the services and treatment that they need to stay healthy. As a way to support cost-effective access to HIV care and treatment, as well as other necessary medical care, the RWP is able to purchase insurance coverage for clients living with HIV by paying insurance premiums, deductibles and co-pays. This service provides yet another way that the RWP supports access to life-saving HIV care and treatment while still fulfilling its role as a payer of last resort.

The RWP has always been a bipartisan program and the undersigned organizations pledge to work together with the Congress, Administration, community advocates and people living with HIV to maintain this broad-based support. In the 2009 reauthorization, the Working Group facilitated an agreement that produced a consensus document signed on to by more than 300 community organizations, which became the basis for that reauthorization legislation. We will again strive to produce
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such a document when relevant evidence of the impact of the ACA is available and understood. We are currently working to provide an appropriate RWP review in advance of reauthorization. This analysis will include information about the impact of ACA implementation and knowledge about how to end the AIDS epidemic. Meanwhile, the Working Group will continue to collect qualitative and quantitative data from RWP grantees and clients on their experiences integrating HIV programs and services in the evolving health care system. During this time of tremendous transition, the RWP remains an essential public health program that supports access to expert, comprehensive, and effective care and treatment for people living with HIV.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration of this important issue that is critical to individuals and communities nationwide. If you have questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Working Group Co-Chairs, Ann Lefert or Bill McColl.

Sincerely,

Alaska
HIV/AIDS Services for African Americans in Alaska

Alabama
1917 Clinic of Birmingham
AIDS Action Coalition
AIDS Alabama
AIDS Alabama South, LLC
Birmingham AIDS Outreach
Collaborative Solutions
GLBT Advocacy & Youth Services, Inc.
Lauer and Association
Selma AIR
Southern AIDS Coalition
West Alabama AIDS Outreach

Arkansas
Arkansas Department of Health
Center for Artistic Revolution (CAR)
Healthy Lifestylez
The Living Affected Corporation

Arizona
Phoenix Pride LGBT Center
Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation
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California
AIDS Legal Assistance Project, Public Law Center
AIDS Legal Referral Panel
AIDS Project Los Angeles
AIDS Services Foundation Orange County
APLA Health & Wellness
Christie's Place
Dwayne Carl Enterprises
Foothill AIDS Project
HIV ACCESS
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Division of HIV and STD Programs
Los Angeles LGBT Center
National Pediatric AIDS Network
Orange County HIV/AIDS Advocacy Team
Positive Women's Network - USA
Pozabilities
Project Inform
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
San Francisco Community Clinic Consortium
Sierra Foothills AIDS Foundation
Women's HIV Program at UCSF
Mendocino County AIDS/Viral Hepatitis Network
Project Angel Food

Colorado
Boulder Community Health
Colorado AIDS Project
Colorado Organizations Responding to AIDS (CORA)
Out Boulder
Positive Women's Network - USA Colorado
Red Ribbon Project
Rocky Mountain CARES
The Empowerment Program
The Persons Living With HIV/AIDS Initiative of Colorado (THRIVE!)

Connecticut
AIDS Project New Haven

District of Columbia
ADAP Advocacy Association (aaa+)
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
AIDS United
American Academy of HIV Medicine (AAHIVM)
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American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Sexual Health Association
CAEAR Coalition
Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition
Community Access National Network (CANN)
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
HealthHIV
Human Rights Campaign
Institute for Public Health Innovation
National Alliance for HIV Education and Workforce Development
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition (NBGMAC)
National LGBTQ Task Force
National Minority AIDS Council
Presbyterian AIDS Network
Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition
Society for Public Health Education
START at Westminster
The AIDS Institute
The American Academy of HIV Medicine (AAHIVM)
The Women's Collective
Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services (UCHAPS)
US People Living with HIV Caucus

Delaware
Delaware HIV Consortium

Florida
ALSO Youth Inc.
Behavioral Science Research
Borinquen Health
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Compass
Empower U Community Health Center
Friends-Together, Inc.
HIVRN Associates
Jacksonville Area Legal Aid
Latinos Salud
Metropolitan Community Churches
NOFLACweb.org
North Florida Chapter of the NAMES Project
OASIS
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Orlando Immunology Center
Positive Attitudes
Positive Attitudes Support Group
Pridelines Youth Services
Project Response Inc.
Rural Women's Health Project
Rusty Gordon GLBTA Democratic Caucus of Palm Beach County
The McGregor Clinic, Inc.
The Positive Champions Speakers Bureau Inc.
The Poverello Center
University of South Florida, Florida Family AIDS Network
Whole Family Health Center

Georgia
Advocates for Responsible Care
AID GWINNETT / RIC CRAWFORD CLINIC
AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta
AIDS Resource Council, Inc.
Center for Pan Asian Community Services
EMAGAHA, INC
Emory University
Feminist Women's Health Center
Georgia AIDS Coalition
Georgia Equality
Georgia Rural Urban Summit
Georgians for a Healthy Future
Grady Infectious Disease Program
Health Students Taking Action Together, Inc. (HealthSTAT)
Here's to Life, Inc.
HIV Dental Alliance
HTDI
Independent Living Council of GA
Living Room, Inc.
Mothers Voices Georgia
NAESM
Open Hand Atlanta
POZ VETS USA-INTL
ProGeorgia
Ryan White Early Care Clinic
School of Public Health, Georgia State Univ.
SisterLove, Inc.
TILTT, Inc.
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Hawaii
Life Foundation

Idaho
Siouxland Community Health Center
All Under One Roof LGBT Advocates of SE Idaho, Inc.
Dab the AIDS Bear Project
Positive Connections, LLC

Illinois
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
Alexian Brothers Housing and Health Alliance
Chicago House and Social Service Agency
Chicago Women's AIDS Project
Heartland Health Outreach
HIV and the Aging
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance
Howard Brown Health Center
Illinois Public Health Association
MATEC
Midwest AIDS Training + Education Center
Open Door
Pediatric AIDS Chicago Prevention Initiative
Puerto Rican Cultural Center - Vida/ SIDA
RMR CORE Center/Cook County Health and Hospital Systems
Taskforce Prevention and Community Services
Test Positive Aware Network

Indiana
Indiana Youth Group
The Kristen Center

Kansas
Grace of Greater Kansas City

Louisiana
CHANGE Coalition
Delta Region AETC
LLHC (Louisiana Latino Health Coalition for HIV/AIDS Awareness)
Louisiana AIDS Advocacy Network (LAAN)

Massachusetts
AIDS Action Committee
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Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital Plymouth
Boston Public Health Commission
Community Servings
Education Development Center
Fenway Community Health Center
Justice Resource Institute

Maryland
AIDS Action Baltimore
Moveable Feast

Michigan
CARES
Center for Sexuality and Health Disparities
HIV/AIDS Alliance of Michigan
MATEC Michigan
Wayne State University AIDS Research and Education Center
Wellness AIDS Services

Minnesota
Clare Housing

Mississippi
Mississippi Center for Justice
POZ MS

Montana
AIDS Project of the Ozarks

North Carolina
ACRA, Inc.
Catawba Valley Medical Center
Duke University Hospital Pediatric Infectious Diseases
LGBT Center of Raleigh
North Carolina AIDS Action Network
Southern HIV/AIDS Strategy Initiative (SASI)
Western NC Community Health Services
Western North Carolina AIDS Project
Wilson County Health Dept.

New Jersey
African American Office of Gay Concerns
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Buddies of New Jersey, Inc.
Hudson Pride Connections Center
VNACJ Community Health Center, Inc.

New Mexico
Southwest CARE Center

New York
African Services Committee
BOOM!Health
Brooklyn Community Pride Center
Gay Men's Health Crisis
God's Love We Deliver, Inc.
Harlem Pride, Inc.
Harlem United
Harm Reduction Coalition
Metropolitan Community Churches
Mount Sinai St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals
National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc.
National Council of Jewish Women
National Working Positive Coalition
Pride Center of Staten Island
Spencer Cox Center for Health
The Global Justice Institute
Treatment Action Group
Unity Fellowship Church
VillageCare

Ohio
AIDS Resource Center Ohio
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Ohio AIDS Coalition

Oklahoma
Health Outreach Prevention Education, Inc.
Tulsa CARES

Oregon
OHSU/Partnership Project
Cascade AIDS Project
Multnomah County HIV Care Services Program

Pennsylvania
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ActionAIDS
AIDS Coalition of Southwestern Pennsylvania
AIDS Resource Alliance
AIDSNET
ALPHA Pittsburgh, Inc.
B. Keith Edwards
Caring Communities For AIDS, Inc.
LGBT Center of Central Pennsylvania
PATF
Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force
Shepherd Wellness Community
St. Luke's University Health Network
West House, Inc.

Puerto Rico
Bill's Kitchen, Inc.

South Carolina
The ACCESS Network, Inc.
Wateree AIDS Task Force

South Dakota
Black Hills Equality Coalition

Tennessee
Friends For Life
Ladies
Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center
Nashville CARES
Salaam Legal Network & Citizens Council for Human Rights
Tennessee Association of People With AIDS

Texas
Abounding Prosperity Incorporated
AIDS Arms, Inc.
AIDS Interfaith Network
Aldo Castillo-De Lion
Big Country AIDS Resources
International AIDS Empowerment
Legacy Community Health Services
North Central Texas HIV Planning Council
Resource Center
Ryan White Work Group

The Montrose Center
Valley AIDS Council

Utah
Utah Pride
Utah Pride Center

Virginia
Division of Disease Prevention, Virginia Department of Health
HIV Medicine Association
Minority AIDS Support Services, Inc.
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals

Washington
Lifelong
Spokane AIDS Network

Wisconsin
AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin

Wyoming
Wyoming Public Health Association