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CONNECTICUT DELEGATION REQUESTS SUPPLEMENTAL HIV/AIDS FUNDING FOR CONNECTICUT CITIES

Delegation seeks answers on distribution of Ryan White funding

WASHINGTON ♦ Connecticut's Congressional delegation today sent a letter to Connecticut Governor Jodi Rell expressing concern about the drastic cuts to Connecticut's HIV/AIDS funding under the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act of 2006. This year, funding for Hartford and New Haven was drastically cut under the Ryan White Title I funding formula, potentially leaving thousands of people in Connecticut living with HIV/AIDS without the services they need. The letter also asks how the State of Connecticut plans to help mitigate the impact this loss of funding will have on the state's residents.

Hartford, New Haven, and the surrounding areas lost a combined total of \$724,409 in Ryan White Title I funding, along with an additional loss of \$864,014 to the state of Connecticut for HIV/AIDS services and the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP). Cuts in funding of this magnitude have already begun to create new and potentially significant barriers to HIV/AIDS care and treatment in Connecticut.

Connecticut's Congressional delegation recently wrote Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt and Health Resources and Services Administration Administrator Elizabeth Duke urging them to give Hartford and New Haven priority in the supplemental grant-making process that is currently underway in light of the precipitous loss in formula funding experienced by these cities. The letter to Governor Rell urges the State of Connecticut to join Connecticut's Congressional delegation in support of that effort.

♦Thousands of Connecticut's residents living with HIV/AIDS depend on federal assistance to maintain healthy and productive lives, ♦ said Dodd. ♦My colleagues from Connecticut and I

have protested the decision to cut the Ryan White Title I grants, and I am hopeful that the Department of Health and Human Services will restore some of this critical funding with supplemental appropriations. Meanwhile, it is crucial that the State of Connecticut join us in this effort in order to help minimize the impact of this funding loss and protect individuals and their families who rely on Ryan White funding for critical health care and support services. ♦

♦Many hospitals and clinics in Connecticut are already straining to provide services to those affected by HIV and AIDS, ♦ Lieberman said. ♦These funding losses for our state are making their jobs even harder and will keep necessary services from being provided to those suffering from this disease. While most of us are aware of the health hardships wrought by AIDS, we don't always recognize the huge financial strain it imposes as well. We ask Governor Rell to do everything in her power to help get this critical funding restored to help ease the burden on those in Hartford and New Haven who rely on expensive treatments to cope with this debilitating disease. ♦

♦The loss of funds from the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Act for HIV/AIDS services is already being felt within the community and it is critical that we move quickly to prevent the further erosion of services. At the same time, we need to determine why the state's HIV caseload numbers were under represented so we can prevent any additional loss of funds in the future and ensure we are not creating new impediments to HIV/AIDS care and treatment, ♦ said DeLauro.

“Serious concerns have been raised about the manner in which Ryan White funding has been figured in the state, ♦ said Larson. ♦Without question, the loss in funds already has and will continue to have a detrimental impact on the services provided to those living with HIV/AIDS in Connecticut. We urge Governor Rell to join us in appealing to the Administration for immediate supplemental funding and long-term solutions in ensuring care and services aren't disrupted. ♦

♦I am deeply troubled about this \$1.6 million loss in federal HIV/AIDS funding and the grave impact that it will have on health outcomes for individuals and families living with this disease, ♦ said Courtney. ♦I encourage Governor Rell to join the Congressional delegation in support of supplemental funding for these critical lifesaving programs. ♦

♦Members of the Congressional delegation worked fervently last year to make sure that Connecticut received adequate funding to help those in need, ♦ said Murphy. ♦But it is obvious that something has gone wrong with the State's calculations that have led to the current

shortfall. I look forward to working with Governor Rell to rectify this problem, as it should not burden those who are living with HIV and AIDS. ♦

The text of the letter is below:

Dear Governor Rell,

We write today with serious concerns about the recent loss of HIV/AIDS funding under the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act of 2006 of a combined \$724,409 to Connecticut's Transitional Grant Areas (TGAs), Hartford and New Haven, and the additional loss of \$864,014 to the state of Connecticut for HIV/AIDS services and the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP).

A total loss of nearly \$1.6 million in federal HIV/AIDS funding will have a devastating impact on Connecticut and the services provided to individuals and families living with HIV/AIDS. As a result of these funding cuts, services supported by Title I grants such as community-based outpatient medical and dental care, rehabilitative services, home health and hospice care, transportation and housing assistance, nutrition services, and respite care will be jeopardized. Already, over 65 positions have been lost, and food vouchers and food services providing assistance to more than 1,000 people with HIV/AIDS have been eliminated. A loss of funding of this magnitude will create new and significant barriers to HIV/AIDS care and treatment and will put successful health outcomes for people living with HIV/AIDS in jeopardy.

It is our understanding that an explanation for these deep cuts rests with the decision made by the State of Connecticut to appeal to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to use HIV caseload numbers that underrepresented Connecticut's actual HIV caseload. In light of this decision, what is the State of Connecticut's plan to help mitigate the impact this loss of funding will have on our state's residents?

Additionally, we understand that the Bush Administration is currently making decisions about supplemental funding awards for cities under Title I of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act of 2006 for Fiscal Year 2007. Supplemental funding awards are expected to be announced at the end of April.

We recently wrote the Administration in strong support of supplemental funding for Connecticut's TGAs. It is our hope that the State of Connecticut will join us in that effort. In the interim, we look forward to learning of Connecticut's plan to ensure that services for individuals living with HIV/AIDS are not disrupted.

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