



For Immediate Release
July 14, 2010

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National AIDS Strategy Welcomed, But Hardest Part is Acting to Achieve Goals

Washington, DC - AIDS Alliance for Children Youth & Families applauds the Obama Administration for developing the first comprehensive National HIV/AIDS Strategy aimed at combating the HIV epidemic in the United States and urges significant action and funding to ensure successful implementation of the plan.

AIDS Alliance Executive Director Carole Treston said the report identifies the right goals for halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and improving access to care and reducing HIV related disparities for vulnerable individuals and families. However, Treston warned that "the hardest and most important part of the strategy will be implementation. The urgent need for coordinating efforts and identifying and committing the resources to make this plan a reality will be a challenge, especially as a sense of urgency about HIV/AIDS has waned in our country" She adds "AIDS Alliance is committed to supporting the implementation of this plan and we will redouble our efforts to make sure that issues surrounding youth are addressed during the implementation process – a facet of the plan that seems to be lacking."

AIDS Alliance for Children Youth & Families represents the Ryan White Part D community-family centered care programs for women, children youth and families living with HIV/AIDS in the United States. The critical care provided through Part D programs not only helps women, youth and families get and stay healthy, but the coordinated services reduce the overall cost burden in healthcare triggered by one of the world's most costly diseases when untreated, Treston said. "We know the President recognizes the savings in dollars and lives achieved by smart investments made in comprehensive prevention and care."

As the nation strives to achieve affordable, high-quality care for all, Part D networks are a model. The network is similar to a "medical home" – a concept that has become increasingly popular because it simplifies, organizes and coordinates the complexities of staying on top of numerous doctor appointments, ongoing tests and an array of medications that can be overwhelming, especially for those in challenging socioeconomic situations. Comprehensive

care in the medical homes provided by Part D programs are a consistent source of the trusted care women and youth with HIV need to get health and stay healthy.

During his remarks last night at a White House reception unveiling the strategy, President Obama lauded the life of Linda Horton Scruggs, AIDS Alliance Director of Programs and told her story. HIV entered Linda's life on November 21, 1991. She was 13 weeks pregnant at the time of her diagnosis. That same day, she was asked to make the decision to keep her baby, or to terminate the pregnancy. Acting on faith, she chose to have her baby, and to fight HIV just as hard as she had fought the other obstacles in her life. Today she not only has a healthy son free of HIV, she is helping others in her community prevent the spread of HIV.

Treston notes "It is profound that strategies to reduce mother to child transmission of HIV were not required in the National AIDS Strategy due to the sustained dramatic reduction of infant HIV. This is one of the real successes of HIV prevention in the U.S, considering nearly 2,000 babies were born with HIV infection each year in the 1990s and now less than 100 per year over the past few years. Although that number is 100 too many, it has stayed constant despite increasing numbers of woman of reproductive age with HIV, by getting women into care and keeping them in care and treatment. Many of these women receive care in Part D programs that not only prevent the baby's infection; but help mothers to stay healthy for themselves and their families for years to come".

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About AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families

Founded in 1994, AACYF is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to advance the partnership between consumers and providers – we are the voice of women, children, youth and families living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. AACYF works to enhance and expand access to quality, comprehensive, family-centered care to America's children, youth and families affected by HIV/AIDS, as it represents the nation's network of over 650 Ryan White Part D funded community-based organizations. Part D programs serve over 53,000 HIV-affected women, children, youth and families through sites located in 35 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.