



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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OBAMA ADMINISTRATION RELEASES AMBITIOUS NATIONAL HIV/AIDS STRATEGY

Focus now Turns to Implementation, including Resources to Attain Results

Washington DC – The AIDS Institute praises President Obama and the White House Office of National AIDS Policy for developing an ambitious National HIV/AIDS Strategy. “The Strategy will serve as a meaningful roadmap to reduce the number of HIV infections in the U.S., provide care to those who need it, and help reduce the stigma and disparities often associated with HIV/AIDS,” commented Michael Ruppal, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. The Obama Administration invested much effort in the development of the Strategy, which included substantial public input. Ruppal continued, **“Now we must turn our collective energies to implementing it with the necessary leadership and resources to achieve its goals and provide results for people who are currently living with HIV/AIDS or may be affected in the future.”**

The AIDS Institute provided input to the Strategy and is pleased that many of its recommendations are incorporated in the final product. “We are particularly pleased the Strategy seeks to focus on scaling up evidenced-based HIV prevention, including testing and age appropriate education,” said The AIDS Institute’s Deputy Executive Director Carl Schmid. Currently, only three percent of the federal government’s HIV spending is allocated to prevention and there has been a lack of comprehensive sexual health education. “We also strongly support the Strategy’s focus on prevention for gay men and African Americans, the two groups most impacted by HIV in the U.S.,” added Schmid. Men who have sex with men of all races and ethnicities account for 57 percent of all new HIV infections, while African American men and women account for almost one half of infections.

As the Strategy notes, comprehensive health reform will provide care and treatment to many people with HIV/AIDS who do not currently have access to it. Since most of the health reform benefits will not begin until 2014 we need to work with the Administration

and the U.S. Congress to ensure the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, including the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), is sufficiently funded. The Ryan White Program currently provides care, treatment and support services to underserved and low income people living with HIV/AIDS. Due to people losing jobs and health insurance, state budget cuts, and limited increases in federal resources, the Ryan White Program, including ADAP is facing severe constraints. There are currently a record 2,300 people in 12 states on ADAP waiting lists, while some states are about to remove another 1,000 from their programs.

“As health reform is implemented,” noted Schmid, “we must ensure that people with HIV/AIDS receive quality health care, including access to medications, well trained medical providers, and the necessary support services to help people remain healthy.”

“The AIDS Institute looks forward to working with the Obama Administration and the U.S Congress, together with the private and public sectors at all levels, as the Administration turns to implementing the Strategy and brings the domestic AIDS epidemic back to the forefront,” said Ruppal. “We understand that current programs and priorities may need to change. The AIDS Institute stands ready to work with the entire HIV/AIDS community as we move forward to implement what is best to achieve the goals outlined in the strategy and all parties are held accountable so that goals will be reached by 2015.”

Ruppal concluded, “While much of the Strategy addresses HIV in the current context, we must continue to invest in research and strive to actually end HIV/AIDS. That is our ultimate goal.”

To read the Strategy and Implementation Plan please go to the following links:

www.WhiteHouse.gov/AIDS-Strategy
www.WhiteHouse.gov/Presidential-AIDS-Memo
www.WhiteHouse.gov/AIDS-Strategy-Implementation

For more information about the White House Office of National AIDS Policy, go to:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/onap>

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*For more information and to become involved in AIDS advocacy, please contact
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www.TheAIDSInstitute.org*

*The AIDS Institute is a national nonprofit organization that promotes action for social change
through public policy research, advocacy and education.*