

**TESTIMONY REGARDING RYAN WHITE CARE ACT REAUTHORIZATION
U.S. HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TOWN HALL
NOVEMBER 10, 2005
CHICAGO**

Hello my name is Patrice Dean:

I am a 51-year-old woman who has been living with AIDS for 15 years. Six years ago, at the age of 45, I sought out drug treatment. I had lived in denial for three years and did not get tested for five years because it meant I would have to change my behaviors. I stayed in treatment at a transitional housing program for woman with HIV/AIDS for two and a half years and this lengthy stay was what I needed in order to get my life in check.

I was an addict for 30 years and living on the streets supporting myself and my pimp through prostitution. My pimp abused me mentally and my life was always in danger. Those two and a half years in treatment allowed me to get dental services which allowed me to smile with pride and I received complementary therapy to aid me in repairing my liver. I sought out mental health services and received therapy for four years. My peers and support groups allowed me to address my disease and gave me the confidence to face the stigma and discrimination that goes along with this disease.

Please give other people a chance, like I had and support all citizens in the United States with HIV/AIDS, and do not turn your back on us. We need your help and we need you to be compassionate towards all our needs. We need our advocates living with the virus represented and making key decisions in whatever areas of support we need. We need our planning bodies. We need to make these decisions not as an advisory board but as a community planning body.

I thank you for all the services that I now receive and I plead with you to help all those in need to get their lives back and go back to college, so you see there is hope and if you give people a chance, there is hope for success. There is no cost for human life.

Yours Truly,
Patrice Dean