



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

September 25, 2006

RICHARD M. DALEY
MAYOR

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

As mayor of the City of Chicago, I ask your support for the passage of the reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act (RWCA). This Ryan White program currently provides over \$25 million to Chicago and the surrounding nine counties for medical care and support services for people living with HIV and AIDS.

There are over 25,000 people living with HIV and AIDS in the Chicago Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA), which is 87 percent of all people living with HIV and AIDS in the State of Illinois. Reauthorization of this program will insure the continuation of life saving treatment including HIV primary care, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and other vital services.

The essential services provided to the Chicago EMA are preserved through the bill's inclusion of code-based HIV cases in the new funding formula. The State of Illinois implemented a new name-based HIV reporting system on January 1, 2006. The bill's funding formula is the most accurate and fair method for taking into account all persons living with HIV and AIDS during the time required for the new name based system to mature. The inclusion of code cases in the legislation's funding formula has averted the potential loss of millions dollars to the total RWCA grant for the Chicago EMA.

We continue to be concerned about the uncertainties regarding the supplemental funding during the transition to a new funding formula. We recognize that there may be substantial shifts in the supplemental funding throughout the country as attempts are made to address emerging epidemics without increased funding. The HIV service delivery system in the Chicago EMA is highly dependent on the \$10 million in supplemental funding we currently receive. If there are substantial reductions to our supplemental award, we run the risk of destabilizing our existing system of care and support services.

These potential funding decreases could be greatly alleviated with increased appropriations and by extending the hold harmless provision from three to five years. The City of Chicago asks that members of Congress support the efforts of the HIV/AIDS stakeholder

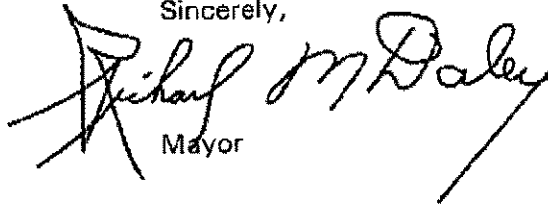
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community to increase appropriations so that every person living with HIV/AIDS receives the medical care and services they deserve.

Two additional technical changes would strengthen the bill. The de-duplication penalty should be applied only to code based names, since all named data will be certified by CDC and will have gone through the de-duplication process. With regard to the early diagnosis grant program, it would be preferable that it include additional dedicated funding, and the language be modified to require states to have at least one of the stated programs, and not both.

The Ryan White CARE Act has provided the delivery of lifesaving medical care to people living with HIV and AIDS, reduced costly inpatient and emergency care, and increased care for low-income, underserved populations. Reauthorization of the RWCA will continue to insure that every person living with HIV/AIDS receives the medical care they need and deserve and I urge you to vote to approve this reauthorization legislation.

Sincerely,


Mayor