



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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February 15, 2006

The Honorable Joe Barton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Dingell
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Barton and Congressman Dingell:

On behalf of The United States Conference of Mayors, I am writing to express our **priorities and concerns** for the Ryan White CARE Act reauthorization process. America's cities continue to bear the greatest burden of the U.S. HIV/AIDS epidemic with more than 70% of people living with AIDS in the U.S. residing in the 51 metropolitan areas funded through Title I of the Ryan White CARE Act. As you move through your deliberations on the new reauthorization we ask that you consider the priorities and concerns of the nations' mayors.

We **oppose** reauthorization proposals that would shift CARE Act resources away from Title I communities and the states where they are located. Such proposals will not solve problems of inadequate appropriations and would severely harm our ability to meet the demonstrated needs in our communities.

We **oppose** efforts to eliminate the "80/20" provision in CARE Act Title II that allows states to receive partial credit for Title I cases in their Title II formula allocations. Providing states with partial credit for people with AIDS in their state who reside in an EMA appropriately recognizes the heavy burden of service provision in high prevalence areas of the state. These resources allow states to support the health care systems in their Title I EMAs, which Title I alone can not support. The 80/20 formula split recognizes the states' important role in coordinating statewide responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, as well as their responsibility to ensure comprehensive care for people with HIV/AIDS whether they live inside or outside of a Title I EMA. The 80/20 formula split also recognizes the cost and effort associated with the many CARE Act mandates to evaluate and coordinate HIV/AIDS services statewide.

We **oppose** the Administration's proposal in the FY 2007 proposed budget to give the Secretary the authority to transfer up to 5 percent of any CARE Act Title to any other Title. The CARE Act titles provide the Congress, the Administration, and CARE Act grantees the ability to target and monitor resources to diverse populations impacted by the epidemic and funds should not be shifted among titles.

Changes are needed and we **would support** a change from 2,000 AIDS cases over the past five years to 1,500 living AIDS cases adjusted for reporting delays and then to living HIV and AIDS cases adjusted for reporting delays at a threshold determined to be equivalent to the 1,500 living AIDS case threshold when a national HIV/AIDS data set is in place.

We **would support** compromise language on the hold harmless protection proposed by the Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief Coalition (CAEAR), which represents the interests of all 51 EMAs that receive Title I funds. The CAEAR compromise would accelerate allowable reductions for jurisdictions receiving the protection from the current rate of 15 percent to 21 percent over five years. It is important that shifts in formula funding are implemented in a way that minimizes harm to existing systems of HIV/AIDS care.

We **would support** basing Title I formula allocations on the number of persons reported to be living with AIDS adjusted for reporting delays within an EMA, instead of the current "ten-year weighted AIDS case band," and then switch to living HIV/AIDS adjusted for reporting delays when a national HIV/AIDS data set is in place

The CARE Act is central to the ability of the nation's hardest-hit cities to respond to the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS. Our cities have made important strides in building comprehensive networks of care and support services, much of it due to support from Title I, but the demand for services in the nation's epicenters remains tremendous. *Together we can make it stronger and more responsive to those in need.*

We appreciate your attention to this matter. Should you have questions please direct them to my Assistant Executive Director for Health, Crystal Swann at 202-861-6707.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Cochran". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Cochran
Executive Director