

May 5, 2003

The Honorable Richard M. Daley  
Office of the Mayor  
121 N. LaSalle, Room 507  
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: Responding to the City's HIV/AIDS Crisis

Dear Mayor Daley:

We are writing to urge you to provide an increase of \$1 million in city corporate funds to the Chicago Department of Public Health for community-based HIV prevention programs in the 2004 budget.

Although the AIDS epidemic has been steadily increasing in Chicago, city support for AIDS services has not kept pace with the need. Since 1997, corporate funds devoted to HIV prevention have declined 8% while the number of reported AIDS cases in the City has increased 21%. There are now an estimated 22,000 Chicagoans living with HIV, many of whom do not know that they are infected

The epidemic continues to exact a heavy toll on people of color. African-Americans, who account for approximately 36% of the City's total population, account for 66% of recently diagnosed adult AIDS cases and 64% of recently diagnosed HIV cases, and the AIDS rate in Chicago among Puerto Ricans (26 per 100,000 residents) is second only to the AIDS rate among African-Americans (41 per 100,000 residents). Similar statistics prompted Baltimore's mayor to declare a "state of emergency" in the fight against AIDS and step up that city's commitment to this cause. In Chicago, we should do no less.

Contributing to this crisis is a disturbing trend that warns of continued growth in the epidemic. Syphilis, which like HIV is spread by unprotected sex, has become more prevalent in Chicago and across the nation. The number of new syphilis infections in the United States rose for the first time in 11 years, and Cook County ranks second in the country for reported cases of syphilis. Equally alarming, the number of syphilis cases in Chicago among men who have sex with men *more than tripled* from 2000 to 2001.

We are all keenly aware that the City is facing extreme financial challenges. The City's HIV/AIDS crisis, however, will not wait until economic conditions improve, and in the current economic and political climate, we cannot realistically expect any additional funding from the state or federal government.

One million dollars spent on HIV prevention has the potential to save \$2.7 million in averted health care costs as well as countless lives. For the health of our wards and the health of our city, we call on you, Mr. Mayor, to provide for an increase of \$1 million in corporate funding for HIV prevention in the 2004 budget.

Respectfully yours,

Alderman Thomas Allen  
Alderman Carrie Austin  
Alderman William Banks  
Alderman Ed Burke  
Alderman Walter Burnett, Jr.  
Alderman Isaac Carothers  
Alderman Michael Chandler  
Alderman Rey Colon\*  
Alderman Vi Daley  
Alderman Manuel Flores\*  
Alderman Leslie Hairston  
Alderman Madeline Haithcock  
Alderman Margaret Laurino  
Alderman Pat Levar  
Alderman Emma Mitts  
Alderman Joe Moore  
Alderman Tom Murphy  
Alderman Burt Natarus  
Alderman Pat O'Connor  
Alderman Billy Ocasio  
Alderman Toni Preckwinkle  
Alderman Gene Schulter  
Alderman Helen Shiller  
Alderman Ed Smith  
Alderman Mary Ann Smith  
Alderman Todd Stroger  
Alderman Theodore Thomas  
Alderman Tom Tunney

*List still in formation.*

\*Signatory added after letter was delivered.