

# Medicaid & HIV/AIDS

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What do people with HIV have to do to qualify for Medicaid in Illinois?**

A: *To get Medicaid in Illinois you must be low-income **and** in a family with children, or at least 65 years old, or disabled. However, just having HIV doesn't count as being disabled.*

**Q: But what about all the low-income and uninsured people with HIV who need medical care so they don't become disabled?**

A: *Right now many low-income people with HIV can't get Medicaid. Instead, they must rely on the Ryan White system for primary care, hope that ADAP covers the prescriptions they need, and pray that they don't need to be hospitalized.*

**Q: That doesn't make any sense at all! Is there any other way people with HIV can get on Medicaid? We need sensible Medicaid!**

A: Yes. Illinois has an opportunity to make Medicaid available to people even **before** they become disabled. The Illinois Department of Public Aid is considering a pilot project for low-income, HIV-positive people to qualify for Medicaid, even if they are not yet disabled. With federal approval, the pilot project could also allow persons with a little higher income than is normally required for Medicaid to qualify.

**Q: So what's the problem? Why aren't we doing this already?**

A: Plans for the pilot program (called a Medicaid waiver) must be submitted and approved by the federal government before Illinois is allowed to start the program. Even though state officials have talked about developing such a program for two years, details of the program have yet to be finalized and the concept has yet to be proposed to the federal government for its approval.

**Q: So how do we make this happen?**

A: *Tell Gov. Blagojevich to make Sensible Medicaid a priority. Tell him to get it done and get it submitted to the federal government. We've waited too long for sensible Medicaid for people with HIV.*

For more information on AFC's Sensible Medicaid campaign, go online to [www.aidschicago.org/advocacy/medicaid\\_expansion.php](http://www.aidschicago.org/advocacy/medicaid_expansion.php) or call Karen A. Reitan at 312-922-2322.