

My name is John Ames. I am the Executive Director of “BEHIV” Better Existence with HIV, located at 6924 North Glenwood in Rogers Park. (773) 381-6300

I am also a person living with HIV. I come before you today to urge the city council to adopt a budget that includes no less than \$1million for HIV/AIDS prevention.

PREVENTION is the SOLUTION.

BEHIV’s vision is to stop the spread of HIV in Rogers Park –we can do this only by working one-on-one with people who are HIV +. The virus is spread by people WITH the virus. BEHIV’ prevention staff work hard to counsel men and women towards the goal of modifying behavior so as to stop the spread of the virus.

Last year BEHIV counseled and tested over 1,000 people in Rogers Park through linkages with Sullivan High School, Centro Romero Social Service Agency, and the United Church of Rogers Park. In addition BEHIV tests at Truman College and Sarah’s Circle in Uptown and 4th Presbyterian Church and Columbia College in the loop.

It is not enough to CARE for people living with HIV. We must STOP the spread of the virus. PREVENTION is the solution. The amount of City funds devoted to HIV prevention has decreased 8% since 1997 despite the fact that the City’s total reported AIDS cases has increased 32% during that same period. I urge you to reverse this trend and to devote \$1 million for HIV prevention.

PREVENTION FUNDING is a good investment in the health and well-being of our city and of our neighborhoods. For every dollar spent on prevention we save the community \$2.70 on averted healthcare costs. HIV prevention is a good investment of tax-payers dollars. I urge you to make a wise investment. Allocate \$1 million to HIV prevention.