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CAEAR Coalition and AIDS Action Release Joint Policy Recommendations For Reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act

Ryan White's Mother—Jeanne White-Ginder—Joins Organizations in Calling for Swift Reauthorization of Strong, Effective Program

(Washington, DC) CAEAR Coalition and AIDS Action—representing Ryan White CARE Act grantees, health departments, HIV/AIDS services providers and educators, and the people with HIV/AIDS they serve—today released recommendations to strengthen the Ryan White CARE Act, the nation's largest discretionary HIV/AIDS program, which serves over 500,000 people each year.

“The collaborative initiative between these two national AIDS organizations and the release of these recommendations are important steps forward in continuing Ryan’s legacy of compassion through reauthorization of the legislation that bears his name,” said Jeanne White-Ginder. “I urge leaders in Congress to place reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act at the top of their agenda so that the many thousands of people living with HIV and AIDS who depend on these programs can know with certainty that the services they rely on will continue uninterrupted in the years ahead.”

First authorized in 1990 and reauthorized again in 1996 and 2000, the CARE Act is due for reauthorization by September 30, 2005. Hailed by President George W. Bush, who called for reauthorization in the State of the Union, as “the nation’s most important AIDS legislation,” the Ryan White CARE Act has a history of strong bipartisan support, and was passed unanimously in the Senate and House in 2000 with over 300 co-sponsors.

“The proposals in the joint recommendations were developed to allow the Ryan White CARE Act to continue adapting to changes in the epidemiology and treatment of HIV, while insuring that communities maintain the ability to use these resources to best meet the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS,” said Patricia Bass, CAEAR Coalition Chair.

“We are now moving forward with joint efforts to build Congressional support for these recommendations and remain committed to working with Members of Congress, President Bush and his Administration, and people throughout the HIV/AIDS community to ensure timely reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act,” said Craig E. Thompson, AIDS Action Council Chair.

Highlights of the CAEAR Coalition and AIDS Action joint recommendations include:

- Updating the eligibility and formula criteria for Title I base awards to use living AIDS cases in FY 2006 and then living HIV/AIDS cases as soon as FY 2007;

- Developing indices to measure HIV-related needs in Title I communities for use in determining supplemental awards;
- Creating a new infrastructure and capacity-building program to promote health care access and quality in rural and underserved communities;
- Increasing support for the Minority AIDS Initiative;
- Moving toward unduplicated service data for all CARE Act programs;
- Strengthening the role of local communities in determining the best method to address their service gaps and continuing needs;
- Strong representation of people living with HIV/AIDS in CARE Act planning;
- Improving HRSA accountability for use of evaluation and technical assistance funds;
- Requiring documented input from consumers with HIV/AIDS in Title III programs;
- Enhancing coordination between the CARE Act and other federal HIV/AIDS programs and services;
- Maintaining strong support and existing mechanisms for the AIDS Education and Training Centers and HIV-related oral health care;
- Reducing barriers that prevent community-based HIV care providers from becoming federally designated “330” clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers and ensuring that HIV/AIDS care is a priority for existing 330 clinics and FQHCs; and
- Requiring HHS to ensure that CARE Act programs receive the lowest government price for pharmaceuticals.

Joint Policy Recommendations for Reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act is available at <http://www.caear.org/new/reauthor2.html> or <http://www.aidsaction.org>, along with additional background and informational materials related to the reauthorization.

The **Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act** is federal legislation that addresses the unmet health needs of persons living with HIV and AIDS by funding primary health care and support services in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories. Its services are divided into four Titles and several additional programs. The program was named for Ryan White, an Indiana teenager whose courageous struggle with HIV/AIDS and against AIDS-related discrimination helped educate the nation.

Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition represents more than 400 grantees under Title I and Title III of the Ryan White CARE Act, including the 51 major metropolitan areas most adversely affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, as well as providers and consumers of CARE Act-funded HIV/AIDS services. The CAEAR Coalition also advocates for adequate funding for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) in Title II of the CARE Act.

AIDS Action is a national organization that advocates on behalf of people living with HIV and AIDS and those who serve them. AIDS Action is dedicated to the development, analysis and creation of sound policies and programs in response to the HIV epidemic. AIDS Action collaborates with the greater public health community to enhance HIV prevention programs and care and treatment services; and to secure comprehensive resources to address community needs until the epidemic is over.

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