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**CAEAR Coalition Honored with Desert AIDS Project's
Steve Chase Humanitarian Award for Medicine and Advocacy**

February 27, 2010

On Saturday, February 27, CAEAR Coalition was honored to receive the Medicine and Advocacy Award at the Desert AIDS Project's annual Steve Chase Humanitarian Awards. Past award recipients include Dr. Anthony Fauci, Dr. Mathilde Krim, Dr. David Ho and Senator Edward M. Kennedy, among many others.

CAEAR Coalition Chair Ernest Hopkins accepted the award on behalf of CAEAR Coalition. His remarks follow:

Good evening. I am honored to accept this Steve Chase Humanitarian Award on behalf of the Board of Directors and members of CAEAR Coalition. Thank you to the gala committee, especially co-chairs Jim Casey and Barbara Keller, and to the Desert Regional Medical Center for their support of this award. And thank you to Darrel Cummings and the LA Gay and Lesbian Center, who are great partners in our work.

It is particularly meaningful to accept the award as we prepare to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Ryan White Program. Twenty years ago, a broad bipartisan group of legislators worked together in partnership with the community to create the emergency response to AIDS. That emergency response has evolved into a model of compassionate care heralded by federal evaluators as one the nation's most effective government programs and, more importantly, by people living with HIV as a lifeline to care and services.

At the heart of the efforts to create and sustain the program over the past twenty years was our great champion Senator Ted Kennedy. Senator Kennedy died just a few months before we secured the four-year extension of the program in October and we also remember and honor him tonight.

Senator Kennedy once said, "Circumstances may change, but the work of compassion must continue." Certainly the circumstances have changed. We have faced many obstacles and conquered many challenges. As the budget shortages facing California reminded us, our work is never easy. In the face of those challenges, what remains unchanged is the importance of the community-based response to the epidemic. It is the hallmark of the Ryan White Program, and surely there is no better example of the power of that response than the Desert AIDS Project.

DAP has long recognized the importance of playing an active role in federal and state advocacy to ensure that the needs of those we serve are brought directly to those in power. The longstanding partnership between CAEAR Coalition and Desert AIDS

Project has been a key factor in our success. Peter DeMartino is a tremendous asset to our board and membership, and the support he receives from David and the board is greatly appreciated by all of us who partner with you.

Those partnerships include so many of you here tonight who are the committed and consistent donors that make the day-to-day services possible. You sustain our efforts to ensure that the nation provides meaningful support to the programs that make such a difference in people's lives.

In October, I was honored to stand with Ryan's mother Jeanne White-Ginder and Congressional leaders as President Obama signed the four-year extension of the Ryan White Program. It was a powerful and historic moment that reflected the tireless work and sacrifices of thousands of people over the past twenty years. Tonight, I feel the same pride standing with all of you to accept this award. In turn, I wish to honor all of your work to ensure that, in the end, our advocacy efforts in Washington result in compassionate care and services for those among us in greatest need. Good night and thank you.

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The Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition is a national membership organization which advocates for federal appropriations, legislation, policy and regulations to meet the care, treatment, support service and prevention needs of people living with HIV/AIDS and the organizations that serve them. CAEAR Coalition's proactive national leadership is focused on the Ryan White Program as a central part of the nation's response to HIV/AIDS. CAEAR Coalition's members include Ryan White Program Part A, Part B, and Part C consumers, grantees, and providers, as well as the Part F AIDS Education and Training Centers. *For more information, visit www.caeear.org*