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**CAEAR Coalition Urges Congress to Heed President's Call
For Ryan White CARE Act Reauthorization in State of the Union**

*Calls on President and Congress to Reverse Years of Flat Funding and
Increase CARE Act Appropriations*

Statement of Patricia Bass, Chair, CAEAR Coalition

February 3, 2005

The reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act is crucial to the health and well-being of people living with HIV/AIDS and President Bush was right to urge Congressional action in his State of the Union address and to highlight the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS crisis on the African American community. We applaud President Bush for including CARE Act reauthorization in his address.

We also urge President Bush to heed his own call to action and provide increased funding for CARE Act programs, all but one of which have been subject to flat funding and rescissions since he took office. The number of people living with AIDS has increased by nearly 100,000 since President Bush took office, but the key discretionary programs to provide basic health care and support services to them have seen no increases in support to care for these growing numbers.

The Ryan White CARE Act is the heart of the nation's response to the domestic HIV/AIDS crisis providing HIV-related health care and support services to uninsured and underinsured people living HIV/AIDS. The program's ability to reach those in greatest need is evidenced everyday in urban and rural communities across the country and was documented by a recent General Accounting Office study.

We look forward to working with Congress, the Bush Administration, and our HIV/AIDS community allies to swiftly reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act and to increase its annual appropriation so that affected communities have the ability to serve those in greatest need.

CAEAR Coalition is a the national grassroots organization advocating on behalf of people living with HIV/AIDS who rely on Title I, Title III and the Title II AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) of the Ryan White CARE Act for primary health care and support services. The CARE Act is the nation's largest discretionary program for people living with HIV/AIDS and supports direct service programs in medically underserved communities in urban and rural communities across the U.S.

For more information – www.caeer.org

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