

PRESIDENTIAL  
ADVISORY  
COUNCIL ON  
HIV/AIDS

February 17, 1999

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Mr. President,

As members of your Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, we reminded you at our December meeting that your role is critical to ensuring adequate HIV/AIDS funding in FY2000. In that spirit, we are writing to comment on your FY2000 budget proposal to Congress.

There is much to thank you for in your budget--specifically, the proposed increases in funding for HIV-related care programs, start-up funding for a federally-sponsored "Know Your Status" campaign, demonstration projects in connection with the Work Incentives Improvement Act, and Congressional Black Caucus's AIDS Initiative (which we strongly urge be made permanent). However, the following areas are of significant concern to us:

**U.S Agency for International Development.** Unlike the \$50 million in emergency spending for the CBC Initiative, your budget fails to continue into FY2000 the \$10 million in new funding to assist AIDS orphans, which you just recently announced on World AIDS Day. Moreover, the minimal funding increase proposed for other AIDS programs at USAID fails to even keep pace with inflation and ignores the steady worsening of the global pandemic, particularly in the developing world, where 95% of all new infections occur.

**Recommendation:** The Council strongly encourages you to support additional funding for USAID's many important global health initiatives, including but not limited to USAID's AIDS programs. In particular, the Council urges that you make the \$10 million program for AIDS orphans a permanent part of the USAID portfolio.

**Department of Defense HIV Research.** DOD's HIV research program, more than half of which is devoted to vaccines, has recently suffered a 40% cut in funding in FY1999, due to the last-minute deletion in conference of the \$15 million which Congress has historically added to the administration's proposed funding for this important program. Your FY 2000 budget would maintain DOD funding at this reduced level. This cut would set back the nation's search for a preventive HIV vaccine, potentially delaying planned vaccine trials in Thailand and possibly derailing altogether plans for separate trials in Uganda.

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton  
February 17, 1999  
Page Two

**Recommendation:** The Council strongly urges the Administration to locate funds in this fiscal year to restore funding for the DOD HIV research program to its FY1998 level.

The Council also recommends that you amend your budget request to ensure no loss in funding this effort in FY2000. In addition, we strongly urge you to direct Secretary Cohen to demand better coordination in AIDS research among the several military services.

**HIV Prevention.** Although your budget includes important start-up funding for the "Know Your Status" campaign which we recommended during our December meeting, it otherwise essentially flat-funds HIV prevention activities. The only hope for reaching your goal of reducing the number of new infections until there are none is to ensure that the federal government pursues a comprehensive and appropriately-targeted national strategy. Such a strategy to turn the tide against HIV will require substantial new funding for HIV prevention activities.

**Recommendation:** The Council strongly urges you to instruct the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the leadership of the Department of Health and Human Services to work with the Office of National AIDS Policy to swiftly develop and articulate a comprehensive national prevention plan. We encourage you to locate sufficient funding to implement such a plan in FY2000.

**Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS.** Recent studies have underscored the critical link between stable housing and access to health care for persons with HIV/AIDS. Although the homeless and marginally housed *can* adhere to prescribed therapies, the instability of homelessness presents myriad stresses that may compromise access to, and consistent use of, medical care. By recommending a mere 6.6% increase (\$15 million) in HOPWA funding in FY2000, your budget fails to address the growing housing crisis among persons living with HIV/AIDS.

**Recommendation:** The Council recommends a substantial increase in funding for HOPWA in order to address in a more effective manner the critical housing needs faced by persons living with HIV disease.

Thank you for your consideration of our views on these important funding matters. We look forward to working with you and members of your Administration in the coming months.

Sincerely,

(Original signed by RSH 2/17/99)

R. Scott Hitt, M.D.

Chair