

PRESIDENTIAL

ADVISORY

COUNCIL ON

HIV/AIDS

September 23, 1998

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you begin negotiations with Congressional leaders on a FY 1999 Continuing Resolution or omnibus appropriations agreement, the members of your Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS urge your strong support for the highest possible funding levels for HIV prevention, care and treatment, housing, research, substance abuse treatment and international. Your continued support for these essential programs is critical to the nation's comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS. Specifically, we request your support for the following:

A \$6.8 million increase in funding for HIV prevention efforts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as recommended by the Senate. Although far below the community's request, this expansion would nonetheless be an important contribution towards your stated goal of reducing the number of new infections until there are no new infections;

A \$275 million increase in funding for substance abuse treatment services funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) block grant, as proposed by the House. Access to drug treatment services is critical to efforts to reduce the incidence of HIV among injection drug users and their partners, particularly given your Administration's decision to continue the ban on the use of federal funds for needle exchange;

An overall \$231 million increase in funding for the Ryan White CARE Act, including, at a minimum, the following increases: \$35.4 million for Title I, \$27 million for Title II base services, \$150 million for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), \$15 million for Title III, \$3.2 million for Title IV, and \$784,000 for the AIDS Education Training Centers. Together, the five titles of the CARE Act represent a comprehensive system of care, which is increasingly important in the new treatment environment;

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A \$21 million increase in funding for the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS program (HOPWA), as proposed by the Senate. Housing services stabilize the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS, thereby facilitating access and adherence to new HIV treatments. We also urge your opposition to the Hilleary amendment, which proposes to shift this \$21 million increase to veterans long term care facilities, as well as the Riggs Amendment, which would deny San Francisco access to federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) due to the city's local domestic partner ordinance;

A 15% increase in funding for HIV research at the National Institutes of Health, which corresponds to the Senate's proposed \$2.0 billion increase in overall research funding. In the area of HIV research, the Council reiterates its strong support for research on microbicides and a vaccine, in particular.

A \$4 million increase for global AIDS programs, as proposed by the House, in order to address the alarming increase in HIV infections worldwide. We also urge you to ensure that any funding increases for global HIV/AIDS issues include an overall increase in the Development Assistance Account, including the section for Child Survival and Infectious Diseases, and that this new funding not come at the expense of other health and development programs.

Finally, should the Congress propose further restrictions on the use of federal funds for needle exchange, we urge you to oppose restrictive language in order to maintain maximum flexibility in the future. In particular, we urge your continued and vociferous opposition to recent efforts to usurp the District of Columbia's ability to use federal, local or private funds for needle exchange.

Each of the federal programs identified above is critical to the nation's comprehensive approach to preventing new HIV infections and caring for those living with HIV/AIDS. We urge you to prioritize increased funding for these programs during upcoming negotiations on FY 1999 appropriations.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

(Original signed by RSH 9/23/98)

R. Scott Hitt, M.D.
Chair

cc: The Honorable Albert Gore, Jr., Vice President
The Honorable Madeline Albright, Secretary of State
The Honorable Andrew Cuomo, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
The Honorable Alexis M. Herman, Secretary of Labor
The Honorable Jacob J. Lew, Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services
The Honorable Togo West, Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Sandra L. Thurman, Director of White House Office of National AIDS Policy

Presidential Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS

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cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Richard Gephardt