

Statement on Proposal to Consolidate Ryan White Part D Funding into Part C Program

March 25, 2014

The Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition (RWMPC), a national coalition of Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program medical providers and administrators, and the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), an organization representing nearly 5,000 frontline HIV clinicians and researchers, are concerned about the FY 15 budget proposal to consolidate Ryan White Part D funding into Part C of the program. At this time of dramatic transition on account of ACA implementation, it is premature to propose such a significant program change before the impact of the ACA on the delivery of Ryan White services can be fully assessed. RWMPC supports efforts to reduce administrative burden for providers and to fully leverage finite resources, but RWMPC respectfully raises the following concerns:

- ***Part D funding supports effective HIV care and treatment services for vulnerable populations, including women and adolescents.*** With adolescents accounting for 39% of new HIV infections in the U.S., it is critical to target resources to support comprehensive services that effectively engage and retain young people in HIV care and treatment.
- ***In some communities, Part D-funded programs are the main providers of HIV care and treatment.*** It is critical to ensure that implementation of any budget proposal does not leave any community without adequate access to effective and comprehensive HIV care and treatment. Also, for Ryan White medical clinics that currently receive only Part D funding, it could prove difficult to successfully compete for Part C funding if there already is a Part C program serving that community; and loss of that Part D program would reduce the community's access to HIV care and treatment.
- ***It is unclear how the proposed consolidation would be implemented.*** RWMPC urges the Administration to provide more detail as soon as possible outlining what the consolidation process would entail and how it would practically impact grantees and access to HIV care and treatment in communities. Since most Ryan White medical clinics receive funding from multiple parts of the Ryan White Program, reduction of funding to one part of the Program can have damaging and unintended consequences to the overall services provided by Ryan White medical clinics, especially now, at a time when providers are working to expand access to HIV care and treatment. Additionally, some Ryan White medical providers already are beginning to plan for budget cuts as a result of the proposal, and this will negatively impact future access to HIV care and treatment.
- ***This proposal was made without input from HIV medical providers, program administrators, and patients.*** RWMPC represents all types of Ryan White medical providers, and the coalition is concerned about any dramatic program changes occurring without consideration of key stakeholder input.

Finally, at this critical time in the HIV/AIDS epidemic, when research has confirmed that early access to HIV care and treatment not only saves lives but prevents new infections by reducing the risk of transmission to near zero for patients who are virally suppressed, ***it is essential to maintain overall funding levels for the Ryan White Program.*** While the ACA provides important new health care coverage options for many patients, most health insurers fail to support the comprehensive care and treatment necessary for many patients to manage HIV infection. High cost sharing, benefit gaps and limited state uptake of the Medicaid expansion necessitate a vital and ongoing role for the Ryan White Program. Increasing access to and successful engagement in effective, comprehensive HIV care and treatment is the only way to lead the nation to an AIDS-free generation and reduce the devastating costs of – including lives lost to – HIV infection.

For questions, please contact Jenny Collier, RWMPC Convener, at jennycollierjd@yahoo.com or 202-295-7188. Visit www.hivma.org for more information about RWMPC and HIVMA.