To: Legislative Directors and Health Legislative Aides  
From: AIDS United Public Policy Committee Members  
Subject: Ryan White Program Reauthorization  
Date: April 22, 2014

The undersigned HIV/AIDS organizations and allied entities are writing to ensure the future of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program. The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program is the third largest source of treatment for people with HIV in the United States and the largest source of discretionary funding solely devoted to HIV/AIDS.

Given dramatic advances in prevention and treatment related to HIV/AIDS we now know that the United States has the ability to End AIDS. First and foremost, peer-reviewed research in the past two years confirms that people with HIV live longer and healthier lives when they consistently adhere to an antiretroviral HIV treatment regimen that produces an undetectable viral load. In turn, an undetectable viral load significantly reduces the levels of HIV transmission. Combined with proven prevention strategies for HIV-negative people at high risk for infection, we now have the necessary tools to stop and ultimately reverse the epidemic. In particular, these broader benefits of HIV treatment have the potential to be enhanced by increasing access to health coverage through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) which will ultimately make insurance more accessible and affordable through the insurance marketplaces and through Medicaid expansion.

The HIV-serving community has now begun to consider how the role of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program should adapt to best take advantage of this ability to End AIDS. Given that we are at the beginning stages of implementing the ACA and many states have not yet chosen to expand Medicaid, the undersigned members of the community have agreed that reauthorization of the Ryan White Program should wait until the ACA has gone through a year or more of full implementation so that relevant data can be collected to understand the impact of health care reform on people with HIV.

Pending full reauthorization, continued funding for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program is important. There was no sunset provision in the most recent (2009) program reauthorization so the program can continue to be appropriated without disruptions that would directly harm those living with HIV. Continuing the program will allow for a thorough evaluation of the program’s role as payer of last resort and the program’s ability to shift funding toward “coverage completion” services such as paying for insurance premiums, deductibles and co-pays. Continuing the Ryan White Program will also provide stability that ensures that people who are now able to access life-saving treatment will be able to continue to adhere to their treatment plans. We additionally seek to devote community resources and energy towards ensuring a successful implementation of the ACA in whatever form it takes in each state and to make certain that all current clients of Ryan White Programs continue to access high quality treatment and care throughout the United States and its territories.

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program has always been a bipartisan program and the undersigned organizations pledge to ensure that we work together with the Administration, Congress and community advocates to maintain that strength. In the 2009 reauthorization, the community worked towards an agreement that produced a consensus document signed on to by more than 300 community
organizations that became the basis for the final legislation. We agree that we will again work to produce such a document after the impact of the ACA is better understood, fully contribute to an appropriate redesign of the program and seek reauthorization ultimately acting on our knowledge of how to end the epidemic. We are confident that the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program will continue to be a needed public health program assisting private and public insurers and assistance programs to provide comprehensive services to all people with HIV.

AIDS United Public Policy Committee Members
AIDS Action Coalition, Huntsville, AL
AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts, Boston, MA
AIDS Alabama, Birmingham, AL
AIDS Arms, Dallas, TX
AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Chicago, IL
AIDS Project Los Angeles, Los Angeles, LA
AIDS Resource Center Ohio, Dayton, OH
AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI
Amida Care, New York, NY
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, Akron, OH
BOOM!Health, Bronx, NY
Christie’s Place, San Diego, CA
Collaborative Solutions, Inc., Birmingham, AL
Delaware HIV Consortium, Wilmington, DE
Gay Men’s Health Crisis, New York, NY
God’s Love We Deliver, New York, NY
IV CHARIS, Cincinnati, OH
Justice Resource Institute, Needham, MA
Legacy Community Health, Houston, TX
Lifelong, Seattle, WA
Metro Wellness & Community Centers, Tampa, FL
Minnesota AIDS Project, Minneapolis, MN
Nashville CARES, Nashville, TN
National Alliance for HIV Education & Workforce Development, Washington, DC
New Orleans AIDS Task Force, New Orleans, LA
Ohio AIDS Coalition, Columbus, OH
Project Inform, San Francisco, CA
San Francisco AIDS Foundation, San Francisco, CA
Southern AIDS Coalition, Atlanta, GA
Southern HIV/AIDS Strategy Initiative, Durham, NC
Treatment Access Expansion Project, Jamaica Plain, MA
Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services, Washington, DC
Whitman-Walker Health, Washington, DC