

ENGEL SEEKS INCREASED FUNDING
FOR AIDS SUFFERERS IN NEW YORK

Current Distribution of Funds Is Unfair

Washington D.C. - Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY) is leading the charge to ensure AIDS sufferers in New York get a fair share of the nationwide funding to fight the scourge of this deadly disease. The national distribution of the Ryan White CARE Act, which provides over six hundred million dollars a year to help Americans living with the HIV disease, does not currently give New York its equal share. In response to this inequity, Rep. Engel, along with New York's Senators and nearly every other Member of the House from the State, will send a letter today to Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson urging him to right this wrong.

"New York has almost 20% of the nation's AIDS sufferers, but only gets 17% of the funding from the Ryan White CARE Act," said Rep. Engel, a member of the Subcommittee on Health. He added, "That means AIDS sufferers in New York get less help from local clinics than other AIDS sufferers do across the nation. I don't want to take away care from other Americans who are trying to cope with this terrible disease, I just want to ensure that New Yorkers have access to same amount of treatment everyone has in this nation."

New York City remains the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS epidemic nationally, with an estimated 80,000 New Yorkers diagnosed and known to be living with HIV or AIDS and at least an estimated 25,000 additional people living with HIV but not yet diagnosed. In 2001 alone the number of reported new AIDS cases was 5,174, which surpasses the total number of people living with AIDS in most U.S. cities.

In 2003, The New York Eligible Metropolitan Area, which covers New York City and all of Westchester, Rockland and Putnam Counties, received \$13,864,076 below the 2002 funding level of the Ryan White CARE Act.

"Recent advances in medical science have given us more hope than ever before to find a cure for AIDS, but sadly that day is not yet here. Until that day arrives, it is essential that the government finds ways to ease the suffering of people infected with HIV. This is why I have contacted Secretary Thompson to ensure that New York receives its fair share of the funding," Rep. Engel concluded.

A copy of the letter is attached.

January 15, 2004

The Honorable Tommy G. Thompson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Thompson:

We are writing in support of the Ryan White CARE Act Title I grant application for the New York Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA) for FY 2004. We respectfully request that the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) provide the New York EMA with \$133,040,950 in vital Title I funding - the full amount requested in the grant application.

The New York EMA has not received sufficient funds through Title I to meet its urgent and disproportionate needs. The New York EMA only receives 17% of the total Title I award, yet has almost 20% of all individuals living with AIDS among the 51 EMAs, and a much greater share than most jurisdictions of AIDS cases with co-morbidities, which make access to care particularly challenging. Furthermore, Title I spending per living AIDS patient in New York is lower than the national average, so that more than half of the EMAs receive a greater proportionate share per patient than New

York.

As you know, Title I was level funded in FY2003. In addition, the New York EMA sustained a substantial reduction of \$13,864,076 below the 2002 grant allotment. The New York EMA was forced to implement a reduction in services - including access to life-saving interventions. Such reductions in funding result in inadequate medical care and supportive services to persons living with HIV/AIDS throughout the EMA.

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We share with you an understanding of the difficulties placed on the Department of Health and Human Services and the Health Resources and Services Administration when the demand for AIDS services increases while funding stays the same. However, the reduction in last year's funding on top of two years of programmatic level funding has forced the New York EMA to cut essential direct services to persons with HIV/AIDS.

Therefore, on behalf of the New York EMA, we request that you through the Health Resources and Services Administration provide the New York EMA with \$133,040,950 in essential Title I funding. The lives of people living with HIV/AIDS in New York depend on it.

Sincerely,

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