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UCHAPS [Urban Coalition HIV/AIDS Prevention Services]

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Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services

SORAYA ELCOCK UCHAPS Community Co-Chair
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December 28, 1999

Ms. Sandra Thurman
Director
White Office on National AIDS Policy
736 Jackson Place
Washington, DC 20503

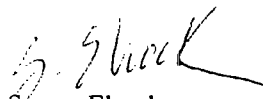
Dear Ms. Thurman:

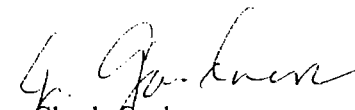
We are writing to you on behalf of the Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services (UCHAPS). As you may be aware UCHAPS is a coalition of the six directly funded jurisdictions through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Collectively, our six jurisdictions represent approximately one-third of the AIDS cases across the United States, and more than one-third of cases among communities of color. In order to most effectively and appropriately utilize these funds, we would like to schedule a meeting with you in January 2000. Members of the UCHAPS six member Steering Committee will be in Washington, DC January 18-20, and would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you.

During this meeting we would like to discuss the goals and mission of UCHAPS, concerns within the local jurisdictions, prevention funding for FY2001, and most importantly the vital and critical role community planning can play in the development future AIDS policy in the United States. Because UCHAPS represents a partnership between government and community in these jurisdictions, we feel as though we can offer a unique perspective on many national issues.

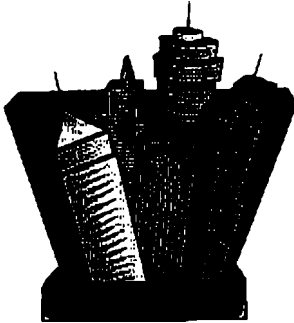
We realize this is short notice, however, we feel that there are many critical issues related to HIV prevention and would like to the opportunity to discuss those with you. Please contact me to confirm an appointment time for this meeting. Given the short time frame and the need to schedule other meetings we would appreciate hearing from you no later than January 10. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


Soraya Elcock
Community Co-Chair


Glenda Gardner
Governmental Co-Chair

Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services



December 15, 1999

Sandra Thurman
National AIDS Policy Director
White House Office of National AIDS Policy
736 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Ms. Thurman:

We are writing to express our strong support for a proposed increase in funding for HIV Prevention in President Clinton's Fiscal Year 2000 budget proposal.

The Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services (UCHAPS) is a coalition of the six jurisdictions directly funded by the CDC for HIV prevention—Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles County, New York City, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. The six directly-funded cities represent 33.2% of the AIDS cases across the United States, and 36.5% of cases among people of color. Each city's delegation to UCHAPS has representatives of the community planning groups and the departments of health in these cities. This close collaboration between government and the community gives us a unique expertise on urban prevention issues. Our knowledge is particularly important because the experience of the HIV epidemic in the largest cities across the country has been shown, time and time again, to be a harbinger of the direction that the epidemic will take in smaller cities and rural areas.

The need for increased funding for HIV prevention is urgent. CDC prevention funding has been flat for the past several years. While the current rates of infection are nowhere near the frightening numbers we saw in the 1980s, there are still approximately 40,000 new infections a year. Even worse, infection rates have been on the increase since 1996, especially among young people and in communities of color. Scrimping on prevention makes no economic sense—future health costs for HIV/AIDS will be staggering if we do not make this investment now.

We are the people working in the communities most severely affected by the lack of funding for prevention initiatives. Through our community planning processes, we try to direct the available

resources where they will have the most impact. But the needs are tremendous, and our planning process reveals an increasing unmet need every year. We know that there are excellent models for programs that can reach those populations most at risk for HIV infection, and we know that there are many community-based organizations that are ready, willing and able to put those programs in place. We also are committed to making sure that our prevention dollars are being spent wisely, and evaluating all funded programs rigorously. Each UCHAPS city is in the process of developing a 5 year evaluation plan in recognition of the importance of effective programs and accountability. The missing piece is adequate funding.

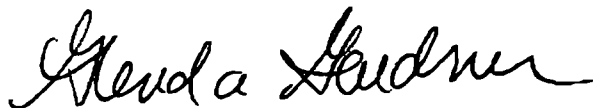
UCHAPS is a member of AIDS Action, and we endorse their request for a 25% increase in the prevention budget. Certainly, anything less than \$100 million will not make a significant difference. A substantial, concerted investment in prevention efforts is needed now.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. This is an opportunity for President Clinton to show a national commitment to HIV prevention. We hope that we will have an opportunity to work with you on this urgent matter of national importance. If you need any additional information, please contact either one of the undersigned.

Sincerely,



Soraya Elcock
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cc: Martin J. Gonzalez Rojas, Chicago
A. Toni Young, San Francisco
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Joe Cronauer, Philadelphia