FOIA Number: 2018-0756-F

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[Health Care Reform and the HIV Epidemic Top Ten Issues] [loose]

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Health Care Reform and the HIV Epidemic
Top Ten Issues

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The Office of the National AIDS Policy Coordinator has provided advice on policy formulation during the development of the Health Security Act (HSA). These efforts were directed towards assuring adequate care and services for people with HIV/AIDS. As the Congress now debates the HSA, the Administration is making every effort to assure that modifications to the President's proposal maintain equity and sensitivity to the special needs of HIV-infected individuals.

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Based on a series of focus groups with people with AIDS and HIV/AIDS service organizations, a list of "top ten" concerns for the HIV community were identified. Information regarding these concerns is attached for your review.

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1. **Premium Financing and Risk Adjustment**

2. **Availability of and Assured Access to "Essential Providers"**

3. **Long-term and Home Care Coverage**

4. **Availability of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services**

5. **Impact of the HSA on the Ryan White CARE Act**

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9. **Effects of "State Options" on the HSA package of benefits**

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1. Premium Financing and Risk Adjustment

Issue: Will the risk adjustment mechanism prevent "redlining" for persons with HIV/AIDS or other life threatening illnesses?

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2. Availability of HIV Specialist, "Essential Providers"

Issue: Will HIV positive persons be able to continue using their local HIV medical specialist?

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Issue: Persons with HIV/AIDS often need home health care and long-term care services. Will the Health Security Act provide those needed services?

Summary: Home health care is included in the nationally guaranteed comprehensive benefits package. A new long-term care initiative will expand coverage of home and community-based care. This will make it possible for more elderly and disabled persons, including persons living with HIV/AIDS to live in their homes and communities while receiving long-term care. The Act will improve

Medicaid coverage for persons in nursing homes.

The HSA will improve the quality and reliability of private long-term care insurance and provide tax incentives for persons to buy it; and tax incentives to help individuals with disabilities work.

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Issue: Mental health needs in the HIV/AIDS community tend to be greater than the average. What will HSA do to provide these services? Injecting drug users, at high risk of HIV infection and transmission, currently have inadequate treatment and preventive services available to them. Will adequate services be available to treat these individuals in order to ameliorate their additive disease and halt the epidemic?

Summary: A base level of mental health services will be provided to all persons through the Health Security Act. We know that viable mental health services are part of a good program of health care and especially beneficial to HIV infected persons.

In order to make a significant difference in the rate of new infections in the injecting drug use population and their sexual partners, the HSA will provide substance abuse treatment to everyone.

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Issue: Will the financial restructuring of the health care system assure the delivery of health care services appropriate to the needs of vulnerable populations whose access problems go beyond lack of insurance?

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