

FOIA MARKER

This is not a textual record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records
Subgroup/Office of Origin: National AIDS Policy Office
Series/Staff Member: Patsy Fleming
Subseries: National AIDS Strategy

OA/ID Number: 10182
FolderID:

Folder Title:
Patsy Fleming Speeches - September 1995

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
S	66	5	9	3

Remarks of
Patricia S. Fleming
National AIDS Policy Director
to
Congressional Black Caucus

September 22, 1995

GOOD AFTERNOON:

Thank you for that gracious introduction and for the opportunity to be with you today to discuss the challenges that HIV and AIDS present to the African-American community.

Let me first say that the members of the Congressional Black Caucus have been among the leaders of our national response to this epidemic. They have been fighting for the programs and the funding that our nation needs to respond aggressively and compassionately to the many problems that HIV and AIDS present.

I also know that many of the people in this room today have been leaders in their own communities, fighting for the rights of people with AIDS; fighting to protect people in their communities from the AIDS virus; fighting to educate their children about AIDS and AIDS prevention; and fighting against the discrimination that has followed this epidemic since its inception in 1981. I thank you for that leadership.

AIDS is one of the great challenges of our day. It challenges our Federal government to respond quickly and correctly to the public health crisis that AIDS has created. It challenges our cities and our states to respond to the needs of their own special communities. And it challenges our communities to both embrace those who are affected and infected while combatting the virus and the prejudice that accompanies it.

It is difficult to believe that AIDS has been with us nearly 15 years. In that time, nearly 450,000 Americans have been diagnosed with AIDS and more than 250,000 men, women, and children have already lost their lives. That is more Americans than died during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf War combined.

And that devastation is not over. Every day in this country, more than 200 people are diagnosed with AIDS. And every day, more than 100 people die of this disease. At the same time, nearly 40,000 Americans become infected with the AIDS virus every year, including nearly 10,000 teenagers.

These are alarming statistics and behind every one of them is a living and breathing individual who is suffering with this insidious disease.

For the African-American community, AIDS poses an even greater challenge. Today, HIV/AIDS is the number one cause of death among black men between the ages of 25 and 44. And it is the second leading cause of death among black women in that age category.

It is clear that AIDS has hit the African-American community disproportionately. While blacks make up about 12 percent of the total U.S. population, they have accounted for 30 percent of all AIDS cases in this country. Three-quarters of American women who have been diagnosed with AIDS have been either black or Hispanic and 80 percent of cases among

children have been among those populations as well.

AIDS is striking particularly hard among gay black men. Over the last five years, the rate of incidence of AIDS among white gay men has risen by 14 percent. But among black gay men, that rate has jumped 79 percent. Here in the District of Columbia, we have seen the rate of incidence of AIDS among white gay men actually decline by 7 percent. But the rate among black gay men has risen 83 percent.

These trends demand action. They demand action from the Congress here in Washington. They demand action from governors in the states and mayors in the cities. They demand action from local school boards, PTAs, churches, and community organizations. And they demand action from you.

Here in Washington the Clinton Administration has worked hard to turn around a Federal response that had been too slow and too timid. We have increased funding for AIDS research, prevention, and care by 30 percent. And we are continuing to press the Congress for further increases next year.

We have revised Social Security disability criteria so that more people -- especially women -- can be eligible for those benefits and, perhaps more importantly, for Medicaid coverage as well.

We have increased funding for housing for people with AIDS by 46 percent and expanded other programs so that they can reach people living on the street with this disease.

And we have nearly doubled the funding for the Ryan White CARE Act, which provides vitally important services to low-income people living with AIDS.

These are important steps but they are not enough as long as those statistics keep growing.

That's why we are pushing so hard for increased funding for research, prevention, and care. And we've had some success with this new Congress -- better than many people had thought we would do when this year started.

Just this week, the House voted overwhelmingly to reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act for another five years. In fact, when this bill came to the House floor, no one spoke in opposition. That's a real sign of the kind of bipartisan support we should have for programs such as this.

The CARE Act provides real assistance to poor people living with HIV and AIDS. Last year alone, it provided care to 200,000 uninsured or underinsured people in this country. It paid the prescription drug bills of another 75,000 people and paid for counseling and testing of 100,000 more. It paid for early treatment of 85,000 people infected with HIV

so that they can remain healthy longer. And it covered the expenses of 15,000 poor women and children enrolled in AIDS clinical drug trials.

So, I'm happy that the House and the Senate have voted to reauthorize this important program. But it's not enough to reauthorize Ryan White, Congress also needs to appropriate enough money for the program. The President has asked for a 14 percent increase in funding for next year. So far, the Congress has only voted a 3 percent increase. That's not enough to keep pace with the growth of this epidemic.

I am also concerned by the vote to freeze AIDS prevention funding. With new cases growing by 200 a day, this is no time to freeze funding.

But my greatest concern -- by far -- is the future of Medicaid. As you know, Medicaid is a vital program to poor people in this country. It provides needed medical care to those who cannot afford it. And it is the source for coverage for 50 percent of all people living with AIDS in this country, including 92 percent of children with AIDS.

Yet the Republicans in Congress want to cut Medicaid funding by \$182 billion over the next seven years and turn the program over to the states in the form of a block grant. These cuts pose a very grave danger to all low-income people in this country and especially to people with AIDS. It has been estimated that states would have to throw eight million people off of Medicaid just to cope with these funding cuts. That is a shocking number and

one that should provide us all with a call to arms.

The next few weeks will decide, in many ways, what kind of country we will be. Will we be a country that continues to help the poor, the aged, and the disabled get the care they need? Will we be a country that responds to the very real needs of people with AIDS? Or will be a country where the government turns its back and leaves those who are in need to fend for themselves.

I'd like to think that our country will continue to respond with compassion to the needs of the poor and those with AIDS. But it will take a lot of work by people like you to make sure that the voices of good are heard.

Let me leave you with a quote from one of my heroes, Frederick Douglas.

"It is not light that is needed, but fire. It is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened. The conscience of the nation must be roused. The propriety of the nation must be startled. The hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed. And its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced."

I know that I can count on you for the thunder and lightening because each of you is

a part of the conscience of our nation and together we can change our future.

Thank you.

GOOD AFTERNOON:

Thank you for that gracious introduction and for the opportunity to be with you today to discuss the challenges that HIV and AIDS present to the African-American community.

Let me first say that the members of the Congressional Black Caucus have been among the leaders of our national response to this epidemic. They have been fighting for the programs and the funding that our nation needs to respond aggressively and compassionately to the many problems that HIV and AIDS present.

I also know that many of the people in this room today have been leaders in their own communities, fighting for the rights of people with AIDS; fighting to protect people in their

communities from the AIDS virus; fighting to educate their children about AIDS and AIDS prevention; and fighting against the discrimination that has followed this epidemic since its inception in 1981. I thank you for that leadership.

AIDS is one of the great challenges of our day. It challenges our Federal government to respond quickly and correctly to the public health crisis that AIDS has created. It challenges our cities and our states to respond to the needs of their own special communities. And it challenges our communities to both embrace those who are affected and infected while combatting the virus and the prejudice that accompanies it.

It is difficult to believe that AIDS has been with us nearly 15 years. In that time, nearly 450,000 Americans have been diagnosed with AIDS and more than 250,000 men, women,

and children have already lost their lives. That is more Americans than died during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf War combined.

And that devastation is not over. Every day in this country, more than 200 people are diagnosed with AIDS. And every day, more than 100 people die of this disease. At the same time, nearly 40,000 Americans become infected with the AIDS virus every year, including nearly 10,000 teenagers.

These are alarming statistics and behind every one of them is a living and breathing individual who is suffering with this insidious disease.

For the African-American community, AIDS poses an even greater challenge. Today, HIV/AIDS is the number one

cause of death among black men between the ages of 25 and 44. And it is the second leading cause of death among black women in that age category.

It is clear that AIDS has hit the African-American community disproportionately. While blacks make up about 12 percent of the total U.S. population, they have accounted for 30 percent of all AIDS cases in this country. Three-quarters of American women who have been diagnosed with AIDS have been either black or Hispanic and 80 percent of cases among children have been among those populations as well.

AIDS is striking particularly hard among gay black men. Over the last five years, the rate of incidence of AIDS among white gay men has risen by 14 percent. But among black gay men, that rate has jumped 79 percent. Here in the District of

Columbia, we have seen the rate of incidence of AIDS among white gay men actually decline by 7 percent. But the rate among black gay men has risen 83 percent.

These trends demand action. They demand action from the Congress here in Washington. They demand action from governors in the states and mayors in the cities. They demand action from local school boards, PTAs, churches, and community organizations. And they demand action from you.

Here in Washington the Clinton Administration has worked hard to turn around a Federal response that had been too slow and too timid. We have increased funding for AIDS research, prevention, and care by 30 percent. And we are continuing to press the Congress for further increases next year.

We have revised Social Security disability criteria so that more people -- especially women -- can be eligible for those benefits and, perhaps more importantly, for Medicaid coverage as well.

We have increased funding for housing for people with AIDS by 46 percent and expanded other programs so that they can reach people living on the street with this disease.

And we have nearly doubled the funding for the Ryan White CARE Act, which provides vitally important services to low-income people living with AIDS.

These are important steps but they are not enough as long as those statistics keep growing.

That's why we are pushing so hard for increased funding

for research, prevention, and care. And we've had some success with this new Congress -- better than many people had thought we would do when this year started.

Just this week, the House voted overwhelmingly to reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act for another five years. In fact, when this bill came to the House floor, no one spoke in opposition. That's a real sign of the kind of bipartisan support we should have for programs such as this.

The CARE Act provides real assistance to poor people living with HIV and AIDS. Last year alone, it provided care to 200,000 uninsured or underinsured people in this country. It paid the prescription drug bills of another 75,000 people and paid for counseling and testing of 100,000 more. It paid for early treatment of 85,000 people infected with HIV so that they can remain healthy longer. And it covered the expenses

of 15,000 poor women and children enrolled in AIDS clinical drug trials.

So, I'm happy that the House and the Senate have voted to reauthorize this important program. But it's not enough to reauthorize Ryan White, Congress also needs to appropriate enough money for the program. The President has asked for a 14 percent increase in funding for next year. ~~So far~~, the Congress has only voted a 3 percent increase. That's not enough to keep pace with the growth of this epidemic.

I am also concerned by the vote to freeze AIDS prevention funding. With new cases growing by 200 a day, this is no time to freeze funding.

But my greatest concern -- by far -- is the future of Medicaid. As you know, Medicaid is a vital program to poor

people in this country. It provides needed medical care to those who cannot afford it. And it is the source for coverage for 50 percent of all people living with AIDS in this country, including 92 percent of children with AIDS.

Yet the Republicans in Congress want to cut Medicaid funding by \$182 billion over the next seven years and turn the program over to the states in the form of a block grant. These cuts pose a very grave danger to all low-income people in this country and especially to people with AIDS. It has been estimated that states would have to throw eight million people off of Medicaid just to cope with these funding cuts. That is a shocking number and one that should provide us all with a call to arms.

The next few weeks will decide, in many ways, what kind of country we will be. Will we be a country that

continues to help the poor, the aged, and the disabled get the care they need? Will we be a country that responds to the very real needs of people with AIDS? Or will be a country where the government turns its back and leaves those who are in need to fend for themselves.

I'd like to think that our country will continue to respond with compassion to the needs of the poor and those with AIDS. But it will take a lot of work by people like you to make sure that the voices of good are heard.

Let me leave you with a quote from one of my heroes, Frederick Douglas.

"It is not light that is needed, but fire. It is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the

nation must be quickened. The conscience of the nation must be roused. The propriety of the nation must be startled. The hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed. And its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced."

I know that I can count on you for the thunder and lightening because each of you is a part of the conscience of our nation and together we can change our future.

Thank you.

Talking Points

Patricia S. Fleming

National AIDS Policy Director

to

Congressional Black Caucus

September 22, 1995

- Thanks for the invitation and for the interest in HIV issues.
- Members of the Black Caucus have been leaders in our Federal response to HIV/AIDS.
- HIV is a crisis for the African-American community.
- Number one cause of death for black men age 25-44.
Number two cause of death for black women age 25-44.
- Blacks account for 12% of the U.S. population but 30% of AIDS cases.
- Black women are heavily affected. Three-quarters of American women diagnosed with AIDS were either black or Hispanic. 21% of cases among African-Americans were among women.
- Black children are also heavily impacted. Six out of 10 children with AIDS are African-American and 8 of 10 are black or Hispanic. HIV/AIDS is the second leading cause

- A very good week -- Ryan White CARE Act vote in the House shows strong bipartisan support for this vital program. The CARE Act provides vitally needed assistance to low-income people living with HIV and AIDS.
- In 1994, CARE Act helped 200,000 uninsured or underinsured people get care.
- Paid the prescription drug bills of 75,000 people.
- Paid for counseling and testing of 100,000 people.
- Paid for early intervention for 85,000 people.
- Supported 15,000 women and children in clinical drug trials.
- HHS appropriations bill has many problems but AIDS numbers are better than expected.
- \$655 million for Ryan White CARE Act.
- Full funding for NIH -- but not a single appropriation

- Flat funding for CDC prevention programs.
- Need to hold on to what we have. Still would like more money for CARE Act and prevention.
- HUD Appropriations bill
- House \$213 million for HOPWA
- Senate \$171 million for HOPWA
- Biggest concern -- by far -- is Medicaid
- 50% of people living with AIDS rely on Medicaid
- 92% of children living with AIDS rely on Medicaid
- Pays for doctor and hospital visits, prescription drugs, testing and counseling
- GOP cuts of \$182 billion would endanger the lives of people living with AIDS
- Would endanger the financial stability of institutions that care for poor people with AIDS (public hospitals, clinics, etc.)

- Need to find a way to deal more aggressively with drug use
- 50% of new infections are among drug users
- 25% of infections are among the partners and children of drug users
- Needle exchange programs are controversial but there's growing evidence that they reduce infection and do not increase drug use
- De-criminalization of needles is another important step. Connecticut program has produced remarkable results.
- We must balance our twin concerns about drug use and HIV infection and come up with a workable strategy.
- Conclusion
- Thanks again for their interest and their strong support of AIDS programs. Look forward to working together.

CONGRESSMAN EDOLPHUS TOWNS

HIV/AIDS COMMUNITY FORUM
Rayburn House Office Building
(Suite 2168, 1st Floor)

Friday, September 22, 1995
3:15 PM - 4:45 PM

TENTATIVE AGENDA

- o Welcome: Edolphus Towns
Congressman, 10th Congressional District, Brooklyn, NY
- o Federal Framework: Patsy Fleming
Director, National Office for AIDS Policy
- o The Power of Prevention: Helene D. Gayle, MD, MPH
Acting Director, National Center for Disease Control and HIV,
STD and TB Prevention
- o Ryan White/HOPWA Issues: Alexander Robinson
Senior Legislative Representative: ACLU
- o Pregnant Women/Newborn Testing: Helen Fox Fields
Project Director HIV/AIDS: Association of State & Territorial
Health Officials
- o Concerns for Community-Based Organizations: Linda Campbell
Executive Director: Minority Task Force on AIDS
- o A Personal Perspective: Neal Collins
Member: Gay Men of African Descent
set # from Jennifer in Ed Towns ofc.
- o Youth, the Forgotten Population: Gladys Sotomayor
Former Coordinator, East New York-Brownsville HIV/AIDS Network
- o Questions & Answers: George Bellinger, Jr.
Moderator, Director of Advocacy & Education: Women & AIDS
Resource Network
- o Closing: Edolphus Towns
Congressman, 10th Congressional District, Brooklyn, NY
- * We want to thank the Gay Men of African Descent and the Women AIDS
Resource Network for coordinating this effort.

Remarks of
Patricia S. Fleming
National AIDS Policy Director
to
Congressional Black Caucus

September 22, 1995

GOOD AFTERNOON:

Thank you for that gracious introduction and for the opportunity to be with you today to discuss the challenges that HIV and AIDS present to the African-American community.

Let me first say that the members of the Congressional Black Caucus have been among the leaders of our national response to this epidemic. They have been fighting for the programs and the funding that our nation needs to respond aggressively and compassionately to the many problems that HIV and AIDS present.

I also know that many of the people in this room today have been leaders in their own communities, fighting for the rights of people with AIDS; fighting to protect people in their

communities from the AIDS virus; fighting to educate their children about AIDS and AIDS prevention; and fighting against the discrimination that has followed this epidemic since its inception in 1981. I thank you for that leadership.

AIDS is one of the great challenges of our day. It challenges our Federal government to respond quickly and correctly to the public health crisis that AIDS has created. It challenges our cities and our states to respond to the needs of their own special communities. And it challenges our communities to both embrace those who are affected and infected while combatting the virus and the prejudice that accompanies it.

It is difficult to believe that AIDS has been with us nearly 15 years. In that time, nearly 450,000 Americans have been diagnosed with AIDS and more than 250,000 men, women,

and children have already lost their lives. That is more Americans than died during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf War combined.

And that devastation is not over. Every day in this country, more than 200 people are diagnosed with AIDS. And every day, more than 100 people die of this disease. At the same time, nearly 40,000 Americans become infected with the AIDS virus every year, including nearly 10,000 teenagers.

These are alarming statistics and behind every one of them is a living and breathing individual who is suffering with this insidious disease.

For the African-American community, AIDS poses an even greater challenge. Today, HIV/AIDS is the number one

cause of death among black men between the ages of 25 and 44. And it is the second leading cause of death among black women in that age category.

It is clear that AIDS has hit the African-American community disproportionately. While blacks make up about 12 percent of the total U.S. population, they have accounted for 30 percent of all AIDS cases in this country. Three-quarters of American women who have been diagnosed with AIDS have been either black or Hispanic and 80 percent of cases among children have been among those populations as well.

AIDS is striking particularly hard among gay black men. Over the last five years, the rate of incidence of AIDS among white gay men has risen by 14 percent. But among black gay men, that rate has jumped 79 percent. Here in the District of

Columbia, we have seen the rate of incidence of AIDS among white gay men actually decline by 7 percent. But the rate among black gay men has risen 83 percent.

These trends demand action. They demand action from the Congress here in Washington. They demand action from governors in the states and mayors in the cities. They demand action from local school boards, PTAs, churches, and community organizations. And they demand action from you.

Here in Washington the Clinton Administration has worked hard to turn around a Federal response that had been too slow and too timid. We have increased funding for AIDS research, prevention, and care by 30 percent. And we are continuing to press the Congress for further increases next year.

We have revised Social Security disability criteria so that more people -- especially women -- can be eligible for those benefits and, perhaps more importantly, for Medicaid coverage as well.

We have increased funding for housing for people with AIDS by 46 percent and expanded other programs so that they can reach people living on the street with this disease.

And we have nearly doubled the funding for the Ryan White CARE Act, which provides vitally important services to low-income people living with AIDS.

These are important steps but they are not enough as long as those statistics keep growing.

That's why we are pushing so hard for increased funding

for research, prevention, and care. And we've had some success with this new Congress -- better than many people had thought we would do when this year started.

Just this week, the House voted overwhelmingly to reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act for another five years. In fact, when this bill came to the House floor, no one spoke in opposition. That's a real sign of the kind of bipartisan support we should have for programs such as this.

The CARE Act provides real assistance to poor people living with HIV and AIDS. Last year alone, it provided care to 200,000 uninsured or underinsured people in this country. It paid the prescription drug bills of another 75,000 people and paid for counseling and testing of 100,000 more. It paid for early treatment of 85,000 people infected with HIV so that they can remain healthy longer. And it covered the expenses

of 15,000 poor women and children enrolled in AIDS clinical drug trials.

So, I'm happy that the House and the Senate have voted to reauthorize this important program. But it's not enough to reauthorize Ryan White, Congress also needs to appropriate enough money for the program. The President has asked for a 14 percent increase in funding for next year. So far, the Congress has only voted a 3 percent increase. That's not enough to keep pace with the growth of this epidemic.

I am also concerned by the vote to freeze AIDS prevention funding. With new cases growing by 200 a day, this is no time to freeze funding.

But my greatest concern -- by far -- is the future of Medicaid. As you know, Medicaid is a vital program to poor

people in this country. It provides needed medical care to those who cannot afford it. And it is the source for coverage for 50 percent of all people living with AIDS in this country, including 92 percent of children with AIDS.

Yet the Republicans in Congress want to cut Medicaid funding by \$182 billion over the next seven years and turn the program over to the states in the form of a block grant.

These cuts pose a very grave danger to all low-income people in this country and especially to people with AIDS. It has been estimated that states would have to throw eight million people off of Medicaid just to cope with these funding cuts.

That is a shocking number and one that should provide us all with a call to arms.

The next few weeks will decide, in many ways, what kind of country we will be. Will we be a country that

continues to help the poor, the aged, and the disabled get the care they need? Will we be a country that responds to the very real needs of people with AIDS? Or will be a country where the government turns its back and leaves those who are in need to fend for themselves.

I'd like to think that our country will continue to respond with compassion to the needs of the poor and those with AIDS. But it will take a lot of work by people like you to make sure that the voices of good are heard.

Let me leave you with a quote from one of my heroes, Frederick Douglas.

"It is not light that is needed, but fire. It is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the

nation must be quickened. The conscience of the nation must be roused. The propriety of the nation must be startled. The hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed. And its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced."

I know that I can count on you for the thunder and lightening because each of you is a part of the conscience of our nation and together we can change our future.

Thank you.