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G. Sterling Zinsmeyer
Praxis Housing Initiative, Inc.
New York, New York

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Vos, Barbara Davidson, David Harre, Rusty Bennett,
Sandra Thurman, Todd Summers, Aimee Berenson, Paul Door,
Fred Karness, Beverly Gosnell, ASONA Members

FROM: Randy Russell

RE: National AIDS Housing Coalition

DATE: September 4, 1998

Greetings. Let me apologize in advance for mixing so many audiences together in one memorandum, but we are moving quickly here today. As you are likely aware, HOPWA is facing cuts in the Conference Committee this year. The committee is slated to meet on September 25th. The House version has proposed **flat funding** of \$204 million (after an amendment from the floor by Congressman Hilleary (R-TN) passed by a very narrow margin) and the Senate has supported the President's requested \$225 million. There are some language changes that are also of concern.

I have enclosed, both for your information and for your action (if you are able and choose to do so) samples of two letters sent to the hill. Letter 1 is a funding oriented letter and was sent to the full Conference committee and Letter 2 is a non-funding letter and was sent to key staffers and key congressional members. We also wrote OMB and all 202 Congresspersons voting against the Hilleary amendment that stole HOPWA's increase thanking them for their support.

NAHC has worked very hard to get the word out about these challenges and we are asking you to join us in that effort (for those non-government employees). So, thanks in advance and we hope to have you join us in this effort.

R2.

National AIDS Housing Coalition, Inc. C/O AIDS Task Force of Alabama P.O. Box 55703 Birmingham, AL 35255 205-781-6448
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Praxis Housing Initiative, Inc.
New York, New York

September 4, 1998

The Honorable Richard Shelby
110 Hart Senate Office Buildings
2nd & C Streets NE
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Shelby:

On behalf of the National AIDS Housing Coalition (NAHC), I write to express concerns of our members who represent thousands of persons living with HIV in America regarding the FY '99 VA/HUD appropriations conference report. NAHC is a coalition of AIDS housing providers, residents, and advocates from across the country. NAHC works to advance the creation, development, management and growth of housing programs for persons living with HIV/AIDS in our nation's communities and represents thousands of those living with HIV. **We need your support to ensure that the FY '99 VA/HUD appropriations conference report provides \$225 million for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program, the amount requested by the President and provided in the Senate bill. We also urge you to provide the Senate level of \$1 billion for the McKinney/Homeless Assistance Grant Program.**

HOPWA:

- provides formula grants to cities and states hardest hit by the AIDS epidemic to create housing programs that effectively and efficiently meet the needs of people in those communities.
- is the only federal housing program that specifically addresses these needs.
- is one of the most flexible and cost-effective HUD programs in existence; decision making is done at the local level and administrative costs are kept at a minimum.

Yet funding for this program has never been sufficient to meet the need. Jurisdictions across the country have long waiting lists of people with HIV/AIDS who need housing assistance and projects that need support to stay open.

It is critically important to provide housing for people living with HIV disease so they can access care and combination drug therapies which have been proven to delay the progression of HIV disease to full-blown AIDS and greatly improve the quality and duration of life. Without housing, people cannot maintain their health, avoid opportunistic infections, or manage complex drug therapy regimens. Far too many individuals with HIV disease are homeless or near homeless; far too many face the devastating dilemma of having to choose whether to pay for their medications and food or pay their rent or mortgage.

National AIDS Housing Coalition, Inc. C/O AIDS Task Force of Alabama P.O. Box 55703 Birmingham, AL 35255 205-781-6448
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We have made great progress in providing the housing needed to enable people to access therapies and delay the progress of HIV disease. **However, contrary to what some have said, the need for HOPWA has *not* decreased.** While some jurisdictions have seen decreases in the numbers of new AIDS cases in the past year, the number of new HIV infections is ***not*** decreasing, and since more people are living longer, there is less turnover and greater demand for housing assistance. Moreover, at least 7 jurisdictions – Wilmington, DE; Buffalo, NY; Birmingham, AL; Honolulu, HI; and the states of New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah – had *increases* in AIDS cases that put them over the 1500-case threshold qualifying for HOPWA entitlement grants.

Additionally, both the House and the Senate FY '99 appropriations bills included provisions to “grandfather” in approximately 5 states – DE, HI, WI, MN and NV – that lost formula grants because a metropolitan area within the state qualified. “Grandfathering” these states will enable them to continue to receive formula grants based on the number of cases outside the metropolitan area, thereby preventing the loss of housing for people living with HIV/AIDS in the outlying state.

The Senate provided the President’s FY '99 request of \$225 million for HOPWA, an increase of \$21 million over FY '98. In the House, however, a floor amendment offered by Rep. Hilleary (R-TN) took this increase of \$21 million and moved it to a veteran’s long-term nursing care program. While we recognize the importance of meeting the needs of our aging veterans, doing so at the expense of the HOPWA program and people living with HIV/AIDS, many of whom are in fact veterans, is robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Without the \$21 million increase in FY '99 HOPWA funding, it may be impossible to meet the needs of the newly-qualifying jurisdictions and these “grandfathered” states without cutting formula funds to other jurisdictions. It certainly will not begin to meet the true need of this population. We urge you to ensure that the FY '99 VA/HUD appropriations conference report provides the \$225 million for HOPWA that is so desperately needed by our communities across the nation.

We also urge you to provide the Senate level of \$1 billion for the McKinney/Homeless Assistance Grant (HAG) program. While HOPWA is the only federal program that specifically addresses the housing crisis facing people living with HIV/AIDS, it is a relatively small program and cannot meet all of the needs. The HAG program plays a vital role in creating a community response to the problem of homeless persons, a growing number of whom are living with HIV/AIDS. Increased HAG funding is essential to help us meet the challenges of housing these families.

Please feel free to contact me at (205) 781-6448 or Aimee Berenson, NAHC’s D.C. consultant, at (202) 797-1446 if you have any questions or concerns or if we can provide you with any additional information. We are looking to you to ensure that the FY '99 VA/HUD appropriations conference report contains the funding levels for HOPWA and the McKinney/HAG programs outlined in this letter. Without this funding:

- we will not be able to provide critically-needed housing for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families.
- we will not be able to continue to make progress in realizing the promise of new drug therapies for improving the quality and duration of life for thousands of people in your community and communities across the nation.
- more people will suffer longer through their HIV disease and/or their homelessness.

On behalf of those people and their families, I thank you for your attention and support.

Sincerely,



Randall H. Russell, MSW, LGSW
President, Board of Directors



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September 4, 1998

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
709 Hart Senate Office Building
2nd & C Streets NE
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Mikulski:

On behalf of the National AIDS Housing Coalition (NAHC), I write to express concerns of our members who represent thousands of persons living with HIV in America regarding the FY '99 VA/HUD appropriations conference report. NAHC is a coalition of AIDS housing providers, residents, and advocates from across the country. NAHC works to advance the creation, development, management and growth of housing programs for persons living with HIV/AIDS in our nation's communities and represents thousands of those living with HIV. We now look to you to help us continue our work to the best of our ability. We need your support to ensure that the FY '99 VA/HUD appropriations conference report contains only those non-funding amendments that will ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of HUD programs. **Specifically, we ask that you carefully consider which non-funding amendments relating to the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA) are included in the conference report.**

There are three non-funding amendments to the HOPWA program to be considered in conference. First, both the House and Senate bills included "grandfathering" provisions for states that lose eligibility for a formula grant when a metropolitan area within the state qualifies. Several states have faced this problem in the past; however, only the *House* version will grandfather all 5 of the states so affected. The House version reflects the intention of HUD and the community in proposing this provision, and we urge you to adopt this more inclusive and fairer version.

Second, both the House and Senate bills provided for a 1% set-aside for technical assistance (TA). TA is very important to ensure that HOPWA programs continue to be increased and maintained in an effective and efficient manner. We urge you to adopt the Senate version of this provision, however, because it includes a requirement that HUD report on how this TA money is spent.

Third, we urge you to adopt a House provision regarding environmental reviews (ERs), which streamlines the ER process by allowing the Secretary to accept the state or locality's review, instead of requiring a separate (and burdensome) HUD review. This provision will simply apply current law in effect for other HUD programs to the HOPWA program. (See 42 U.S.C. 3547).

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NAHC works to advance the creation, development, management, and growth of housing programs for persons living with HIV/AIDS in our communities.

Finally, we are greatly concerned about a non-funding amendment which affects funding for all programs in the VA/HUD bill. The House bill includes an amendment by Rep. Riggs (R-CA) which we believe is inappropriate and will have a seriously negative impact on our ability to serve people living with HIV/AIDS in San Francisco. This amendment serves no purpose other than to express Rep. Rigg's disagreement with the local decision-making of that city's government. We believe it is unconscionable to endanger the health and well being of so many individuals by holding VA/HUD funds hostage to anti-gay sentiments.

Please feel free to contact me at (205) 781-6448 or Aimee Berenson, NAHC's D.C. consultant, at (202)797-1446 if you have any questions or concerns, or if we can provide you with any additional information. We are looking to you to ensure that the FY '99 VA/HUD appropriations conference report contains the HOPWA amendments outlined in this letter. These amendments will enable us to continue to provide critically-needed housing for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families, efficiently and effectively. With these amendments and the \$225 million in FY '99 funding for HOPWA requested by the President and provided by the Senate, we will be able to continue to make progress in realizing the promise of new drug therapies for improving the quality and duration of life for thousands of people in your community and communities across the nation. On behalf of those people and their families, I thank you in advance for your attention and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randall H. Russell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Randall" being more prominent than the last name "Russell".

Randall H. Russell, MSW, LGSW
President, Board of Directors

Dear Evelyn -

9/21/98

Thank you so much for your lovely note. I have passed it along to the President. I am sure that he will appreciate your kindness and support. Rest assured that he continues to care deeply about the well-being of all people living with HIV or AIDS, and will continue to fight on their behalf.

Andy and I wish you the best! Todd

Deputy Director, Office of National AIDS Policy

Evelyn Phillips
5268 Cord Ave
Jax Florida
32209

Dear Mr Summers;

I hope this letter find you
in good spirit, under these
sadden circumstances.

I just want to drop you
a few lines to assure you and
other. That the Plural People
living with aids and Her.
Are one Hundred percent
in the President corner. No Matter
what.

I hope he will not be
Impeach. Because if he is
what will happen to people
With Her/Aids.

ok my I'm way ahead
of myself. I meant you when
you came to Jacksonville
Florida. My name is Evelyn
Phillips (Peaches) the woman
with short blonde hair.

But truly, what will happen to us.

Let the president know he's deeply loved.

Because he's a great man and president. No one is perfect. Everyone makes a mistake. He's not a God he's a man.

He's done great things of people of color black, etc. I was in tears when I watch a trip the President took to Africa.

The first American President to go to Africa and to help my Ascendants.

Please tell him Mr Sumner we are praying for him and we do forgive him. and keep strong as he has been. He has the world on his shoulder.

Still he's a great man and president & your truly
Evelyn Phillips

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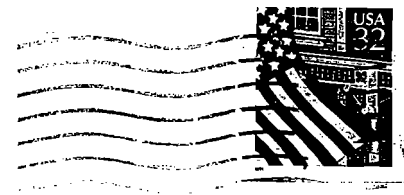
Response Type	Response Date	Responder ID	Responder Name	Action Promised
Action Completed	Action Date	Addressed To		
		Todd		

Notes

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Sender's City	Sender's State	Sender's Zip
Jacksonville	FL	32211

Evelyn L. Phillips
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Joliet Il 32209

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