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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT NAMES SANDRA L. THURMAN
AS DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

The President today announced his intention to appoint Sandra L. Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy.

For more than a decade, Ms. Thurman has been a leader and advocate for people with AIDS at the local, state, and federal levels.

From 1988 to 1993, Sandra L. Thurman, of Atlanta, Georgia, served as the Executive Director of AID Atlanta, a community based organization which provides health and support services to people with HIV/AIDS and offers an array of HIV prevention programs. Under her leadership, AID Atlanta, the largest and oldest AIDS service organization in the south, tripled in size and became a multi-million dollar, direct-service agency with 90 staff members and over 1000 volunteers.

From 1993 to 1996, Ms. Thurman was the Director of Advocacy Programs at The Task Force for Child Survival and Development at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. As Director, she focused on the global health concerns of children, including immunization and the eradication of polio. She is currently Director of Citizen Exchanges at the United States Information Agency.

Ms. Thurman is a Member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and of the Georgia State AIDS Task Force, the Fulton County HIV Planning Council and the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR). She has served on the Board of Directors of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition, AID Atlanta, Sisterlove, Inc., and the Atlanta AIDS Interfaith Network, among others. She is a recognized expert on AIDS issues and has provided testimony before the United States Senate, the White House Conference on HIV/AIDS and the National Commission on AIDS. Ms. Thurman earned a Bachelor's degree from Mercer University.

The Office of National AIDS Policy is responsible for coordinating federal policy and programs on HIV/AIDS, and with building partnerships between Federal agencies, the AIDS community, AIDS service providers, state and local officials, and major business leaders. The objective of the Office of National AIDS Policy is to increase the rate of progress in treatment and education, and to maintain the focus on science and scientific research.

Czar Wars

White House AIDS Czar Sandy Thurman fights ignorance, bigots, and Donna Shalala

by Earl Crittenden

"A woman told me that her boyfriend refused to wear a condom because he claimed that he couldn't find one big enough. So I took one out of its wrapper and unrolled it over my fist, all the way down to my elbow. 'Honey,' I said, 'if that's *really* the case, then HIV is the least of your problems.'"

No, that's not Jay Leno shtick or Planned Parenthood propaganda, it's part of the colorful canon of Clinton's most electric, dedicated—and by many accounts—popular appointee, AIDS Czar Sandy Thurman.

She appears every bit the part of a "Designing Women" regular...an Atlanta drawl, carefully coiffed blonde mane, Chanel suit, and big gold earclips that get harvested before every phone call. Yet beneath the illusion of a lady who lunches lies the instincts and abilities of a tireless, and more importantly, fearless warrior.

Like Secretary of State Madeline Albright, the only other shining star in Clinton's scandal-torn second term, Thurman dances to an entrancing rhythm of feminine charm and shrewd leadership, stroking her allies and sugaring detractors of her cause. And also like Albright, Thurman sees positive results from the laborious task of coddling crusty social conservatives, managing to frequently rally such right wingers to her side as Utah's Orrin Hatch.

Ironically, one person not cozy with Thurman is the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala. "Donna Shalala is a miserable bureaucrat," says one White House aide who would only speak anonymously. "She's completely angry that her buddy Patricia Fleming is no longer AIDS Czar and has since refused to support the office [out of her Health and Human Services budget]. She doesn't really care about AIDS. And worse, everyone in the White House knows how jealous Shalala is of Sandy Thurman. But Shalala is one of the First Lady's old friends and is protected by her. No one dares to criticize Shalala."

The funding for the Office of AIDS Policy is now provided through HUD (Housing and Urban Development). She also convinced the President that forking over an office in the historic and beautiful Old Executive Office Building (known as the OEOB) would tremendously help her daily task of arm twisting and schmoozing for help with the AIDS epidemic. "An invitation to the OEOB with a view of the White House and the Washington monument can really make an impression, and a difference," confides Thurman.

Sandy Thurman, in her element, in front and inside the White House

Thurman's friendship with Bill Clinton began while he was still Governor of Arkansas and was testing the waters for a national role as a member of the conservative branch of the Democratic party—the National Democratic Leadership Council. Thurman was later picked by her friend James Carville to run Clinton's primary campaign for the Atlanta area, a position that landed her in the midst of the Gennifer Flowers high drama.

A political insider since birth, Thurman's mother was a prominent Atlanta attorney. "My mother was always entertaining diplomats. And if I researched each invitee's home country and briefed her, she'd set place for me at the table. I learned early."

Thurman combined her political connections wit tough business savvy during her long stint in the private sector running AID Atlanta, the largest AIDS support group in the South, overseeing a staff of 90 and hundreds of volunteers. Now that Thurman talks about the prices that the government will pay for AIDS medications, pharmaceutical companies realize they're not dealing with just another Clintonian who has no problem spreading taxpayer largess. "The United States government is one of the largest buyer of AIDS medications from Glax Wellcome, and when I mentioned that I wanted them to give me a better price, they were stunned and recalcitrant. 'Now honey, my daddy was Republican, and there's enough Republican in me to know that everyone should make a profit.'" Thurman drawls. "Let's just say that Glaxo Wellcome probabl didn't like me." But they continue to talk to her. Characteristically unfazed, she asserts, " I didn't come here to win a Miss Congeniality contest." When things are not going her way in terms of congressional monetary appropriations, she often jokes, "Sometimes I just want to run down to Capitol Hill and take a crowbar to some of those closet doors."

As dynamic as Thurman is, do most people even know there is an AIDS czar in the Clinton administration. "Probably not," Thurman responds. "My predecessors did some great things, but publicizing themselves wasn't one of them." What further sets Thurman apart from the previous czars is her ability to get the president's ear. "The AIDS Czar's office has no budget authority. All we really have is the president's bully pulpit. And I intend to use it."

Thurman's outspoken manner can sometimes upstage extremists. The radical left seems to even somewhat resent her. Besides fighting rebukes from Shalala, ACT UP is quite thorny to Thurman. When asked to give a critique of Thurman, ACT UP, NY spokesman Mark Hannay could only say, "We just hope that *she* doesn't demur to the powers that be the way the previous czars did."

On a more local level, however, Thurman has nothing but fans. Long Island's Association for AIDS Care (LIAAC) Director of Policy and Public Relations Jeffrey Reynolds offers, "Sandy is trying to keep the urgency alive on a national level and that's what we're trying to do locally with events like this Saturday's Tales Off '97 [the high-energy gala benefiting AIDS services on the East End.] If Sandy is town, chances are you'll find her giving the night's showcase singer "I will Survive" Gloria Gaynor, a run for her money.

I hope you can read this

R O N
S A L E H

WASHINGTON DC

FOR: DANIEL MONTOYA

FROM: RON SALEH

DANIEL,

SANDY WANTED ME TO FAX THIS TO YOU.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TOP READ IT, I HAVE THE ORIGINAL IN MY OFFICE (130 I K STREET)

GIVE ME A CALL.

202 523 5332

HAVE A GOOD DAY!

632. 1096

AIDS Policy Center
For Children, Youth & Families

918 Sixteenth Street, NW
Suite 201
Washington, DC 20006
Tel. (202) 785-3564
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David C. Harvey, MSW
Executive Director

July 23, 1997

Yeas & Nayes
George
1633 Broadway
New York, NY 10019

Although *George* sees fit to make snide remarks about Sandy Thurman, National AIDS Policy Director at The White House and a friend of Bill Clinton's (August, 1997), I want to assure you that the national AIDS community remains committed to working with Sandy on vital life and death matters related to AIDS.

Sandy has already proven herself by taking the lead on federal funding of needle exchange programs which save lives, addressing budget issues, and fighting inside The White House hierarchy to make sure that this administration does not lose its focus on sound public health strategies related to AIDS.

How about some responsible reporting on the real issue: how we as a country are going defeat this dread disease and end the AIDS epidemic? Let's go, *George*.

Sincerely,

David C. Harvey
Executive Director
Co-Chair, National Organizations Responding to AIDS Coalition

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 7, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT DURING ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW AIDS DIRECTOR

The Roosevelt Room

2:25 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. I'd like to join the Vice President in thanking Eric Goosby for his work as the acting director of the office. And thank you very much, Patsy Fleming, for the fine job that you've done. We miss you. Thank you, Scott Hitt and all the members of the council, for the good work that you have been doing. And thank you, especially, for the meeting we had together not so very long ago, and the candor and passion of your recommendations.

America has not beaten AIDS yet, but we are getting closer and we remain committed to the fight, and to winning it. More than ever, we need a strong advocate for people with AIDS, and of course that's why we're here today. Let me begin by reiterating our goal: We want to find a vaccine against the AIDS virus and a cure for those who have HIV infection. They have eluded researchers so far, but we are committed -- the work goes on. And it will go on until we are successful.

Until that day comes when HIV and AIDS no longer threaten our people, we must continue to do all we can to hit the epidemic hard with a coordinated effort of research, treatment, and prevention.

When I took office, I established the Office of National AIDS Policy because America had been turning its head away from the problem. Many Americans had not come to grips with HIV and AIDS, and their consequences. Now we're learning. AIDS strikes in the best of families, and from this disease no community has immunity -- gay or straight, black or white, male or

female, old or young. Anyone can get AIDS. And if we're going to win this fight, we must begin with the acceptance of that fact.

It was clear four years ago, as it is now, that it is only with an aggressive campaign against AIDS that we will win the battle. That is what we have begun. In the first four years, we increased overall spending by about 60 percent. In FY 1997 alone, $167 million will go to state AIDS drug assistance programs which provide access to medication, including protease inhibitors for low-income individuals with HIV who don't have prescription drug coverage.

We speeded the time needed to approve drugs to treat AIDS, leading to the approval of eight new AIDS drugs and 19 for AIDS-related conditions. This has allowed many people simply to go on with their lives, to live with this disease not worry free, but not in despair either.

We should all take heart that for the first time there has been a marked decrease in deaths among people with AIDS. With new treatment therapies, we hope to see even greater life expectancy. And with education and prevention, the number of estimated new HIV infections has slowed dramatically.

In our war against AIDS, the Office of National AIDS Policy plays an important role. The office is charged with coordinating all our federal policy and programs regarding AIDS. It also builds our partnerships with other levels of government and with private-sector communities, and organizations. Our office is charged with keeping us on track in treatment and in education and to keep our focus on research for ways to prevent and cure this disease. An AIDS vaccine could save millions of lives around the world. And we must help those who are already infected. Make no mistake, a cure has been and always will be our very first priority.

The Director of this office must be an individual with a clear understanding of AIDS as a disease and as a social issue in America, someone who knows the scientific front as well as the human center of AIDS, someone who knows how to fight to cut through red tape to get the job done.

I have found that person in the woman I nominate today to fill this office, Sandy Thurman. She is no stranger to those who know this issue. She's a member of our Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS. She's worked on the front lines of the AIDS epidemic for more than a decade. She's been an advocate and a catalyst at the state, local and national levels. She transformed AID Atlanta, the oldest and largest AIDS service organization in the south into one of the most successful projects of its kind anywhere in the country. As Executive Director from 1988 to 1993, she tripled its size, beefed up its budget, and made it a direct service agency with a staff of 90 workers and 1,000 volunteers.

Her experience in running a large community-based organization makes her especially well equipped to build the partnerships we need throughout our country, for beating the AIDS epidemic will take this kind of teamwork everywhere. I am pleased that she has agreed to serve as the Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. I've worked with her and I can attest, she tells it like it is, she speaks the truth unvarnished, she won't hold back in this office. (Laughter and applause.) She is passionate. She is committed. She is difficult to say no to. (Laughter.) And I have already assured her that she will have the support and the resources she will need, including my personal support, to succeed in this all-important task. My door is open to her.

And now I'd like for us to all hear what she has to say. Sandy Thurman. (Applause.)

MS. THURMAN: Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President. Your being here together is a wonderful demonstration of your support for me and the administration's commitment to ending the AIDS crisis. I'm delighted to be joined today by my wonderful colleagues from the Presidential Advisory COuncil on HIV and AIDS and so many very special friends with whom I've worked the last 13 years in trying to end this epidemic.

Mr. President, I certainly share your commitment to a cure and note that extraordinary recent advances in medical treatments have given us a reason for real new hope to ending this plague.

But as we all know, this is a crisis of monumental proportion, and it will take -- it must be addressed, and will take all of our vigor and energy that we can muster to make progress. The epidemic is not over, and we must not and will not rest until HIV is eradicated.

Today, I would like to ask all of those living with HIV and with AIDS, the community of care-givers and care-providers, AIDS activists like you all, local and national AIDS organizations, and all of the federal agencies to join with the President, the Vice President, and with me in an even stronger partnership. Only by working together will we have a chance to successfully meet the challenges that this very complicated epidemic presents to us.

The President has given me his personal commitment to leadership in the fight against AIDS. And in turn, I offer the community my commitment to the efforts to develop vaccines, to find a cure, to stop the transmission of HIV, and to provide appropriate services and care to people who are already infected.

We will work to improve the level of services and housing for those most in need in our society while assessing the implications of changes in social programs like welfare and Medicaid.

We will strive to support culturally appropriate services and prevention messages to communities of color, to women, and to young gay men, where this epidemic is moving the fastest.

We will work to counteract the devastating effects that homophobia and that racism continue to have on this epidemic. (Applause.) And as you all know, this is not work that is done in a vacuum by me or by those in Washington here; it is work done by the thousands of people that are dedicated and selfless in communities across the country who struggle day by day to make a difference in this epidemic.

Our job here is to make certain that they have the tools to do their good work. I am heartened that, in that same spirit, the President has made a substantial effort to strengthen the Office of National AIDS Policy. We will be working to build an enhanced staff with a broad range of skills, and we will enlist those who best understand medical and treatment issues, prevention and education, social programs, discrimination, and housing to share their expertise. And I might add, that would be all of you. (Laughter.)

We have the highest level of access to the administration; I think that's evidenced here today. This is another reflection of the President's and the Vice President's commitment to our nation's war on HIV and AIDS.

This is not an epidemic of a few; this is an epidemic of us all. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have already lost their lives to AIDS. It has stolen some of our brightest and most talented friends and loved ones in the prime of their lives. And beyond our borders, millions of people struggle against the odds to live long enough to reap the benefits of a cure.

We are deeply aware of responsibility that this administration has to all Americans who are living with HIV and AIDS and to those all around the world who turn to us for leadership and for hope. That is an awesome responsibility, one which will demand that each of us work together in partnership to end this epidemic. I look forward to that partnership and appreciate this opportunity to offer whatever help I can to the President, to the nation, and to all of you who are working so valiantly on the front lines of this epidemic. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Q Mr. President, how do you see this czar being different from your two previous czars? What would you like to see changes? And have you given up on the so-called "Manhattan-style" project that you promised in '92?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, I think if you look at -- let me answer the second question first. If I had told you in 1993 in January, when I was inaugurated, that we would have eight new AIDS drugs for AIDS-related conditions, that the number of AIDS related deaths would be going down, and that the quality and length of life expectancy would expand as much as it

had -- you would think that we had put a pretty good amount of effort in here with a 60 percent increase in our investment.

So I think we're moving forward. What I would like to see is to rely on the President's Advisory Council and the AIDS office even more heavily to mobilize even more people to have support for the work we're doing and research to find a cure and also to do more at the grassroots level and to tie the efforts at the community level to what we're trying to do nationally. And I think that Sandy will do a very good job of that because of her personal experience in Atlanta.

Q Mr. President, when you read --

Q Mr. President, do you think you've made any progress, sir, in your meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu? Do you think that you've been able to move the peace process closer to being back on track as you put it earlier?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we had quite a long meeting, as you know. What are we, an hour late staring here? (Laughter.) And I apologize to you for that, but it was necessary that we continue the meeting. It was a long and very thorough meeting. Now it's important for us to visit with the Palestinians, and we'll try to get this thing up and going again.

But you know how these things are -- it's -- I need to say not too much about it and work very hard on it. And that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to do my best to get it back on track.

Q But Mr. President, Mr. President, did anything -- part of the Palestinian frustration is that the Prime Minister says he wants to speed up final status talks. His position -- according to them -- appears to be final. I was wondering if you saw any change in that position?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm -- again, I think the problem is the more I comment, the more I undermine the chances of success. We had a very specific, frank, candid, and long talk. And now we're going to talk to the Palestinians and see whether there is something we can do to get this going again. And we'll do our very best, and I'll do my best. That's all I think I should say right now.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

END 2:40 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT NAMES SANDRA L. THURMAN
AS DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

The President today announced his intention to appoint Sandra L. Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy.

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Ms. Thurman is a Member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and of the Georgia State AIDS Task Force, the Fulton County HIV Planning Council and the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR). She has served on the Board of Directors of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition, AID Atlanta, Sisterlove, Inc., and the Atlanta AIDS Interfaith Network, among others. She is a recognized expert on AIDS issues and has provided testimony before the United States Senate, the White House Conference on HIV/AIDS and the National Commission on AIDS. Ms. Thurman earned a Bachelor's degree from Mercer University.

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THE KING CENTER

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Founder

DEXTER SCOTT KING
Chairman, President and
Chief Executive Officer

CHRISTINE KING FARRIS
Vice Chair, Treasurer

MARVIN GOLDSTEIN
Vice Chair

BERNICE A. KING
Secretary

Ms. Sandy Thurman
c/o Sheridan Group
1808 Swann St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20009

Fax: (202) 483-1964

Dear Ms. Thurman

On behalf of the King family, Dexter Scott King and the King Center family, I write to add my congratulations to the many you are receiving on being appointed as U.S. AIDS Czar.

President Clinton has chosen wisely in selecting you for this important post, for you have demonsurated exceptional vision. dedication and leadership in the struggle against AIDS.

I look forward to your stewardship of the national effort to prevent the spread of AIDS, to secure quality medical care for its many victims and to fund the research needed to eradicate this scourge from our nation and world. In this endeavor, you have my support, and I wish you the greatest success in your mission.

In closing, let me just say how gratifying it is that one who has worked so hard in this important cause will be providing leadership in developing national AIDS policy in the years ahead. With faith in your commitment and prayers for your success, I look forward to hearing of your accomplishments in the future.

Sincerely,

Coretta Scott King

Coretta Scott King

AID Atlanta

1438 West Peachtree St., NW
Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30309-2955

Office: 404-872-0600
Fax: 404-885-6799

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 7, 1997
From: AID Atlanta 1438 West Peachtree St NW Ste 100 Atlanta 30309
Contact: Mark King, Director of Education and Communications
(404) 872-0600 ext. 215
kingm@aidatlanta.org

Former AID Atlanta Director Named Clinton's "AIDS Czar"

(Atlanta - April 7) At a White House ceremony this afternoon, President Clinton will name former AID Atlanta executive director Sandra Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. The position, commonly known as "AIDS Czar," is in charge of developing a national response to the disease, which has killed well over half a million Americans.

Thurman has a clear picture of her immediate priorities. "We first must reinvigorate the AIDS Policy Office," she said. "And there are two aspects to this. First, we must establish an effective relationship with the AIDS community. I'd like to form a 'kitchen cabinet' of people who have worked in AIDS for the past decade. In this respect I envision the office as a battle station for the community to bring their concerns and help influence public policy. The second aspect is to establish a stronger front at the White House. The President has listened to my concerns about this, and has moved the Directors' office into the White House complex, which should allow the director to keep HIV issues on the forefront of the national conscience, reminding the administration of the importance of AIDS issues."

Thurman has worked in direct services for people with AIDS for a number of years, and this perspective is a strong component of her attitude toward the disease "I have an understanding of what it takes to work in the front lines in the battle against AIDS," she said. "For 13 years I've worked as a volunteer helping people with AIDS on an individual basis, and as an administrator. This privilege has allowed me to hear and understand the needs of the community, because I've been there. This is not simply policy for me" she adds. "This is personal."

Thurman joined the staff of AID Atlanta, which has provided service and support for people with AIDS since 1982, as Director of Public Affairs in 1988. In 1989 she became the agency's executive director, and served until 1993, when she left for the Carter Center to become Director of Advocacy Programs for the Task Force for Child Survival and Development. She currently serves as a White House appointee to the United States Information Agency, in the role of Director of Citizen Exchange.

# # #

from the office of

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

of Massachusetts

STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON THE APPOINTMENT OF SANDY THURMAN TO BE THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

For Immediate Release
April 7, 1997

Contact: Jim Manley
(202)224-2633

Sandy's appointment as the new White House AIDS Czar is just what the doctor ordered. Sandy is a talented, committed, and courageous leader who has been on the front lines of the battle against AIDS since the beginning.

Sandy does not shy away from difficult challenges -- she thrives on them. From community based AIDS organizations to corporate board rooms to Congress, she knows how to bring people together and get the job done. I'm delighted she has agreed to this all-important effort. She's an ideal general for our modern war on AIDS.

SF AIDS FOUNDATION

NEWS RELEASE

1-page FAX To: **Assignment Editors** (Health/AIDS)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeff De Lucio-Brock (415) 487-3072
Pager (415) 280-0223

AIDS CZAR APPOINTMENT

MEANINGFUL RESPONSIBILITY AND CLOSE ACCESS TO PRESIDENT NECESSARY TO TACKLE DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE EPIDEMIC

S.F. AIDS FOUNDATION APPLAUDS TODAY'S APPOINTMENT OF SANDRA THURMAN

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, APRIL 7, 1997 -- The San Francisco AIDS Foundation applauds the appointment today of Sandra Thurman as the country's new AIDS czar and calls on President Clinton to grant her the access and authority she will need to tackle the dramatic new changes in the epidemic.

"President Clinton must grant the new AIDS czar access, responsibility and delegation of meaningful authority," says San Francisco AIDS Foundation Executive Director Pat Christen, who was on a short list of finalists for the position. "Only with such authority can Sandra Thurman effectively face the dramatic changes taking place in managing and ending the HIV epidemic -- particularly the advent of the genuinely hopeful protease inhibitor drugs that will revolutionize the way AIDS services and HIV prevention programs are delivered."

Thurman and Christen have collaborated on the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief, a coalition of the nation's largest metropolitan areas funded under Title I of the Ryan White CARE Act. Thurman, a member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, served as executive director of AID Atlanta, the southeast's first and largest AIDS service organization.

"Sandy is an intelligent, articulate and compassionate AIDS advocate," Christen said. "Her understanding of the complexity of AIDS issues makes her an invaluable resource in the development of national AIDS policy."

* * *

The San Francisco AIDS Foundation -- a non-profit, community-based AIDS service organization at the forefront of the battle against HIV disease since 1982 -- provides direct services to thousands of clients, mounts HIV prevention campaigns, coordinates more than 400 volunteers, operates a trilingual AIDS crisis and referral hotline, advocates for humane HIV-related public policies, and distributes AIDS treatment information worldwide.

# # #

NAPWA's Statement on the Appointment of Sandra Thurman

NAPWA

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS

April 7, 1997

The National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) commends the President on his strong appointment of a longstanding member of the AIDS community to the White House Office of National AIDS Policy.

We at NAPWA are committed to working with Ms. Thurman and this Administration to end the AIDS epidemic. We encourage the President to ensure that Ms. Thurman and the office have the resources required and his personal support necessary for success.

1413 K Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20005
Phone: (202) 898-0414
FAX (202) 898-0435

CAEAR
CITIES ADVOCATING EMERGENCY AIDS RELIEF

Contact: H. Alexander Robinson,
Administrator of Federal Affairs
202.789.3565

CAEAR Applauds the President on the Appointment of Sandra Thurman to White House Post

April 7, 1997

The Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition applauds the President on his appointment of Sandra Thurman to Director of the White House Office on AIDS Policy.

Sandra Thurman, a national AIDS community leader, and former Vice Chair of the CAEAR Coalition, has what takes to lead America on HIV issues. Her background as an AIDS activist, administrator, and policy leader give her necessary credentials to lead America to better treatments, care and ultimately a cure for HIV disease.

The CAEAR Coalition has witnessed first hand her tenacity, strength of character and excellent grasp of complex policy issues, in her ongoing efforts to assure that people living with HIV get the treatments, medical care, and social supports that they require as basic life needs.

We strongly support her appointment and look forward to continuing our close working relationship with Ms. Thurman and others at the White House as together we struggle to adapt to the ever changing spectrum of HIV disease and fight for a cure to AIDS worldwide.

The CAEAR Coalition
1413 K Street N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
202 789 3565
202 789 4277 fax

Executive Committee
Ernest Hopkins, *Chair*
Suzi Rodriguez, *Vice Chair*
Robert Rybicki, *Treasurer*
[illegible] Member, Southern

CITY OF ATLANTA NEWS RELEASE

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30335-0319
CONTACT: Nick Gold
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT CLINTON NAMES SANDRA THURMAN AIDS CZAR
Mayor Campbell applauds her appointment

President Bill Clinton today appointed Atlanta native Sandra L. Thurman the nation's AIDS Policy Director. The announcement was made at a White House ceremony.

"Sandra Thurman has been a good friend and will be a tremendous asset to President Clinton and his administration in moving forward the nation's AIDS agenda," said Mayor Bill Campbell. "Sandra has a long history of commitment to Atlanta's AIDS community as well as the nation's. She is a goal oriented and results driven individual who I know will make significant progress in better informing our nation about the AIDS epidemic."

Ms. Thurman has a long history of involvement in serving the AIDS community. In 1988 she joined AID Atlanta, the southeast's first and largest AIDS service organization, as the Director of Public Affairs. In 1989 she was named its Executive Director. Under her leadership, AID Atlanta tripled in size, becoming a multi-million dollar, direct-service agency with 90 staff members and over 1,000 volunteers.

On World AIDS Day in 1994, Mayor Campbell hosted the first Mayor's Conference on AIDS in the Workplace. More than 400 business and labor leaders participated in the conference, and **"thanks to Sandra Thurman and the support of her constituents in the AIDS community the conference was a great success," added Mayor Campbell.**

# # #

HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN

1101 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20005
Contact: Kim I. Mills
phone 202 628 4160
pager 800 386 5997

News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, April 7, 1997

THURMAN A STRONG CHOICE TO LEAD OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY, HRC SAYS

Combines Leadership Skills, Commitment, Access

WASHINGTON -- The Human Rights Campaign commended the selection today of Sandra L. Thurman as the new White House "AIDS czar."

"Sandra Thurman is a solid choice to take the Office of National AIDS Policy to the next level," said Elizabeth Birch, HRC's executive director. "She brings the right mix of leadership, political skills and commitment to the fight against HIV and AIDS."

Winnie Stachelberg, HRC's legislative director, said Thurman has the experience to design and execute the administration's programs in the changing struggle to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

"Thurman was intricately involved in the creation and enactment of the Ryan White CARE Act in 1990 and its reauthorization in 1996," said Stachelberg, who is a member of the executive committee of the umbrella group National Organizations Responding to AIDS. "She knows AIDS policy and politics from the inside--a critical combination of skills for this job."

Thurman becomes the third person to hold the position known informally as the national AIDS czar. She replaces Patsy Fleming, who stepped down after President Clinton's re-election.

Thurman, a native of Atlanta, is past executive director of AID Atlanta, the Southeast's first and largest AIDS service provider. Under her stewardship, AID Atlanta tripled in size, becoming a multimillion-dollar direct service agency with 90 staffers and more than 1,000 volunteers, serving thousands of individuals and families with HIV and AIDS.

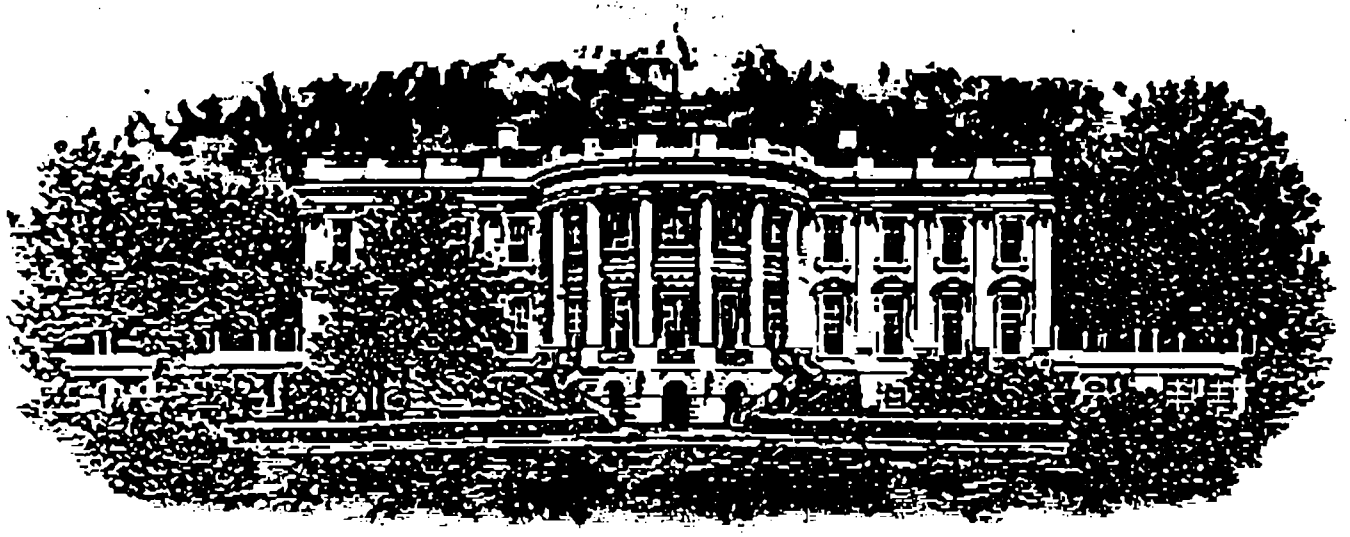
Most recently, Thurman was a White House appointee to the U.S. Information Agency, responsible for cultural and professional exchange programs.

Thurman has a history of political and public service. In 1996, she held a variety of positions with the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton-Gore re-election campaign.

From 1993 to 1996, Thurman was director of advocacy programs at the Task Force for Child Survival and Development in Atlanta. The task force is sponsored by such respected organizations as UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Thurman's AIDS-related activities include serving on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS; the Georgia State AIDS Task Force; the Fulton County HIV Planning Council; and the executive committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief.

THE WHITE HOUSE



OFFICE OF MEDIA AFFAIRS

FAX : (202) 456-6409
PHONE: (202) 456-7150

TO: Presidential Adv. Council / Dan Mendoza

FROM: Pat Lewis

DATE: 4-8

RECEIVER FAX: 785-1255

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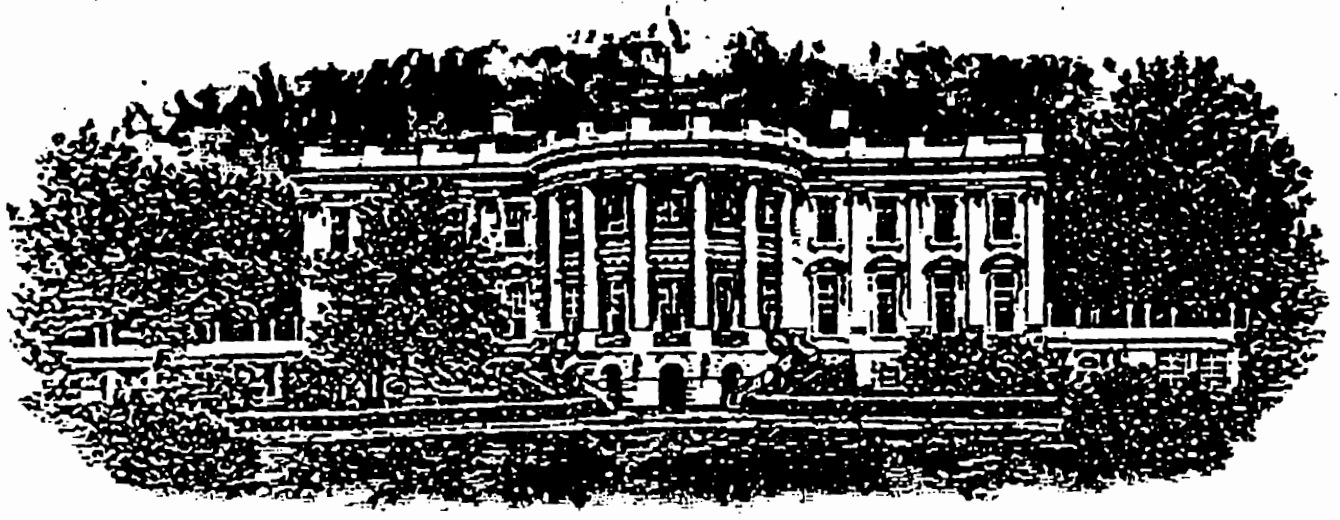
THE WHITE HOUSE



OFFICE OF MEDIA AFFAIRS

FAX : (202) 456-6409
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TO: Presidential Adv. Council / Dan Mendoza

FROM: Pat Lewis

DATE: 4-8

RECEIVER FAX: 785 - 1255

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT DURING ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW AIDS DIRECTOR

The Roosevelt Room

2:25 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. I'd like to join the Vice President in thanking Eric Goosby for his work as the acting director of the office. And thank you very much, Patsy Fleming, for the fine job that you've done. We miss you. Thank you, Scott Hitt and all the members of the council, for the good work that you have been doing. And thank you, especially, for the meeting we had together not so very long ago, and the candor and passion of your recommendations.

America has not beaten AIDS yet, but we are getting closer and we remain committed to the fight, and to winning it. More than ever, we need a strong advocate for people with AIDS, and of course that's why we're here today. Let me begin by reiterating our goal: We want to find a vaccine against the AIDS virus and a cure for those who have HIV infection. They have eluded researchers so far, but we are committed -- the work goes on. And it will go on until we are successful.

Until that day comes when HIV and AIDS no longer threaten our people, we must continue to do all we can to hit the epidemic hard with a coordinated effort of research, treatment, and prevention.

When I took office, I established the Office of National AIDS Policy because America had been turning its head away from the problem. Many Americans had not come to grips with HIV and AIDS, and their consequences. Now we're learning. AIDS strikes in the best of families, and from this disease no community has immunity -- gay or straight, black or white, male or

female, old or young. Anyone can get AIDS. And if we're going to win this fight, we must begin with the acceptance of that fact.

It was clear four years ago, as it is now, that it is only with an aggressive campaign against AIDS that we will win the battle. That is what we have begun. In the first four years, we increased overall spending by about 60 percent. In FY 1997 alone, $167 million will go to state AIDS drug assistance programs which provide access to medication, including protease inhibitors for low-income individuals with HIV who don't have prescription drug coverage.

We speeded the time needed to approve drugs to treat AIDS, leading to the approval of eight new AIDS drugs and 19 for AIDS-related conditions. This has allowed many people simply to go on with their lives, to live with this disease not worry free, but not in despair either.

We should all take heart that for the first timc there has been a marked decrease in deaths among people with AIDS. With new treatment therapies, we hope to see even greater life expectancy. And with education and prevention, the number of estimated new HIV infections has slowed dramatically.

In our war against AIDS, the Office of National AIDS Policy plays an important role. The office is charged with coordinating all our federal policy and programs regarding AIDS. It also builds our partnerships with other levels of government and with private-sector communities, and organizations. Our office is charged with keeping us on track in treatment and in education and to keep our focus on research for ways to prevent and cure this disease. An AIDS vaccine could save millions of lives around the world. And we must help those who are already infected. Make no mistake, a cure has been and always will be our very first priority.

The Director of this office must be an individual with a clear understanding of AIDS as a disease and as a social issue in America, someone who knows the scientific front as well as the human center of AIDS, someone who knows how to fight to cut through red tape to get the job done.

I have found that person in the woman I nominate today to fill this office, Sandy Thurman. She is no stranger to those who know this issue. She's a member of our Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS. She's worked on the front lines of the AIDS epidemic for more than a decade. She's been an advocate and a catalyst at the state, local and national levels. She transformed AID Atlanta, the oldest and largest AIDS service organization in the south into one of the most successful projects of its kind anywhere in the country. As Executive Director from 1988 to 1993, she tripled its size, beefed up its budget, and made it a direct service agency with a staff of 90 workers and 1,000 volunteers.

Her experience in running a large community-based organization makes her especially well equipped to build the partnerships we need throughout our country, for beating the AIDS epidemic will take this kind of teamwork everywhere. I am pleased that she has agreed to serve as the Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. I've worked with her and I can attest, she tells it like it is, she speaks the truth unvarnished, she won't hold back in this office. (Laughter and applause.) She is passionate. She is committed. She is difficult to say no to. (Laughter.) And I have already assured her that she will have the support and the resources she will need, including my personal support, to succeed in this all-important task. My door is open to her.

And now I'd like for us to all hear what she has to say. Sandy Thurman. (Applause.)

MS. THURMAN: Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President. Your being here together is a wonderful demonstration of your support for me and the administration's commitment to ending the AIDS crisis. I'm delighted to be joined today by my wonderful colleagues from the Presidential Advisory COuncil on HIV and AIDS and so many very special friends with whom I've worked the last 13 years in trying to end this epidemic.

Mr. President, I certainly share your commitment to a cure and note that extraordinary recent advances in medical treatments have given us a reason for real new hope to ending this plague.

But as we all know, this is a crisis of monumental proportion, and it will take -- it must be addressed, and will take all of our vigor and energy that we can muster to make progress. The epidemic is not over, and we must not and will not rest until HIV is eradicated.

Today, I would like to ask all of those living with HIV and with AIDS, the community of care-givers and care-providers, AIDS activists like you all, local and national AIDS organizations, and all of the federal agencies to join with the President, the Vice President, and with me in an even stronger partnership. Only by working together will we have a chance to successfully meet the challenges that this very complicated epidemic presents to us.

The President has given me his personal commitment to leadership in the fight against AIDS. And in turn, I offer the community my commitment to the efforts to develop vaccines, to find a cure, to stop the transmission of HIV, and to provide appropriate services and care to people who are already infected.

We will work to improve the level of services and housing for those most in need in our society while assessing the implications of changes in social programs like welfare and Medicaid.

We will strive to support culturally appropriate services and prevention messages to communities of color, to women, and to young gay men, where this epidemic is moving the fastest.

We will work to counteract the devastating effects that homophobia and that racism continue to have on this epidemic. (Applause.) And as you all know, this is not work that is done in a vacuum by me or by those in Washington here; it is work done by the thousands of people that are dedicated and selfless in communities across the country who struggle day by day to make a difference in this epidemic.

Our job here is to make certain that they have the tools to do their good work. I am heartened that, in that same spirit, the President has made a substantial effort to strengthen the Office of National AIDS Policy. We will be working to build an enhanced staff with a broad range of skills, and we will enlist those who best understand medical and treatment issues, prevention and education, social programs, discrimination, and housing to share their expertise. And I might add, that would be all of you. (Laughter.)

We have the highest level of access to the administration; I think that's evidenced here today. This is another reflection of the President's and the Vice President's commitment to our nation's war on HIV and AIDS.

This is not an epidemic of a few; this is an epidemic of us all. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have already lost their lives to AIDS. It has stolen some of our brightest and most talented friends and loved ones in the prime of their lives. And beyond our borders, millions of people struggle against the odds to live long enough to reap the benefits of a cure.

We are deeply aware of responsibility that this administration has to all Americans who are living with HIV and AIDS and to those all around the world who turn to us for leadership and for hope. That is an awesome responsibility, one which will demand that each of us work together in partnership to end this epidemic. I look forward to that partnership and appreciate this opportunity to offer whatever help I can to the President, to the nation, and to all of you who are working so valiantly on the front lines of this epidemic. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Q Mr. President, how do you see this czar being different from your two previous czars? What would you like to see changes? And have you given up on the so-called "Manhattan-style" project that you promised in '92?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, I think if you look at -- let me answer the second question first. If I had told you in 1993 in January, when I was inaugurated, that we would have eight new AIDS drugs for AIDS-related conditions, that the number of AIDS related deaths would be going down, and that the quality and length of life expectancy would expand as much as it

had -- you would think that we had put a pretty good amount of effort in here with a 60 percent increase in our investment.

So I think we're moving forward. What I would like to see is to rely on the President's Advisory Council and the AIDS office even more heavily to mobilize even more people to have support for the work we're doing and research to find a cure and also to do more at the grassroots level and to tie the efforts at the community level to what we're trying to do nationally. And I think that Sandy will do a very good job of that because of her personal experience in Atlanta.

Q Mr. President, when you read --

Q Mr. President, do you think you've made any progress, sir, in your meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu? Do you think that you've been able to move the peace process closer to being back on track as you put it earlier?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we had quite a long meeting, as you know. What are we, an hour late staring here? (Laughter.) And I apologize to you for that, but it was necessary that we continue the meeting. It was a long and very thorough meeting. Now it's important for us to visit with the Palestinians, and we'll try to get this thing up and going again.

But you know how these things are -- it's -- I need to say not too much about it and work very hard on it. And that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to do my best to get it back on track.

Q But Mr. President, Mr. President, did anything -- part of the Palestinian frustration is that the Prime Minister says he wants to speed up final status talks. His position -- according to them -- appears to be final. I was wondering if you saw any change in that position?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm -- again, I think the problem is the more I comment, the more I undermine the chances of success. We had a very specific, frank, candid, and long talk. And now we're going to talk to the Palestinians and see whether there is something we can do to get this going again. And we'll do our very best, and I'll do my best. That's all I think I should say right now.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

END 2:40 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT NAMES SANDRA L. THURMAN
AS DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

The President today announced his intention to appoint Sandra L. Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy.

For more than a decade, Ms. Thurman has been a leader and advocate for people with AIDS at the local, state, and federal levels.

From 1988 to 1993, Sandra L. Thurman, of Atlanta, Georgia, served as the Executive Director of AID Atlanta, a community based organization which provides health and support services to people with HIV/AIDS and offers an array of HIV prevention programs. Under her leadership, AID Atlanta, the largest and oldest AIDS service organization in the south, tripled in size and became a multi-million dollar, direct-service agency with 90 staff members and over 1000 volunteers.

From 1993 to 1996, Ms. Thurman was the Director of Advocacy Programs at The Task Force for Child Survival and Development at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. As Director, she focused on the global health concerns of children, including immunization and the eradication of polio. She is currently Director of Citizen Exchanges at the United States Information Agency.

Ms. Thurman is a Member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and of the Georgia State AIDS Task Force, the Fulton County HIV Planning Council and the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR). She has served on the Board of Directors of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition, AID Atlanta, Sisterlove, Inc., and the Atlanta AIDS Interfaith Network, among others. She is a recognized expert on AIDS issues and has provided testimony before the United States Senate, the White House Conference on HIV/AIDS and the National Commission on AIDS. Ms. Thurman earned a Bachelor's degree from Mercer University.

The Office of National AIDS Policy is responsible for coordinating federal policy and programs on HIV/AIDS, and with building partnerships between Federal agencies, the AIDS community, AIDS service providers, state and local officials, and major business leaders. The objective of the Office of National AIDS Policy is to increase the rate of progress in treatment and education, and to maintain the focus on science and scientific research.

THE KING CENTER

ETTA SCOTT KING
der

TER SCOTT KING
irman, President and
f Executive Officer

RISTINE KING FARRIS
Chair, Treasurer

RVIN COLODSTEIN
ce Chair

ERNICE A. KING
ecretary

Ms. Sandy Thurman
c/o Sheridan Group
1808 Swann St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20009

Fax: (202) 483-1964

Dear Ms. Thurman

On behalf of the King family, Dexter Scott King and the King Center family, I write to add my congratulations to the many you are receiving on being appointed as U.S. AIDS Czar.

President Clinton has chosen wisely in selecting you for this important post, for you have demonstrated exceptional vision. dedication and leadership in the struggle against AIDS.

I look forward to your stewardship of the national effort to prevent the spread of AIDS, to secure quality medical care for its many victims and to fund the research needed to eradicate this scourge from our nation and world. In this endeavor, you have my support, and I wish you the greatest success in your mission.

In closing, let me just say how gratifying it is that one who has worked so hard in this important cause will be providing leadership in developing national AIDS policy in the years ahead. With faith in your commitment and prayers for your success, I look forward to hearing of your accomplishments in the future.

Sincerely,

Coretta Scott King

Coretta Scott King

AID Atlanta

1438 West Peachtree St., NW
Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30309-2955

Office: 404-872-0600
Fax: 404-885-6799

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 7, 1997
From: AID Atlanta 1438 West Peachtree St NW Ste 100 Atlanta 30309
Contact: Mark King, Director of Education and Communications
(404) 872-0600 ext. 215
kingm@aidatlanta.org

Former AID Atlanta Director Named Clinton's "AIDS Czar"

(Atlanta - April 7) At a White House ceremony this afternoon, President Clinton will name former AID Atlanta executive director Sandra Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. The position, commonly known as "AIDS Czar," is in charge of developing a national response to the disease, which has killed well over half a million Americans.

Thurman has a clear picture of her immediate priorities. "We first must reinvigorate the AIDS Policy Office," she said. "And there are two aspects to this. First, we must establish an effective relationship with the AIDS community. I'd like to form a 'kitchen cabinet' of people who have worked in AIDS for the past decade. In this respect I envision the office as a battle station for the community to bring their concerns and help influence public policy. The second aspect is to establish a stronger front at the White House. The President has listened to my concerns about this, and has moved the Directors' office into the White House complex, which should allow the director to keep HIV issues on the forefront of the national conscience, reminding the administration of the importance of AIDS issues."

Thurman has worked in direct services for people with AIDS for a number of years, and this perspective is a strong component of her attitude toward the disease. "I have an understanding of what it takes to work in the front lines in the battle against AIDS," she said. "For 13 years I've worked as a volunteer helping people with AIDS on an individual basis, and as an administrator. This privilege has allowed me to hear and understand the needs of the community, because I've been there. This is not simply policy for me" she adds. "This is personal."

Thurman joined the staff of AID Atlanta, which has provided service and support for people with AIDS since 1982, as Director of Public Affairs in 1988. In 1989 she became the agency's executive director, and served until 1993, when she left for the Carter Center to become Director of Advocacy Programs for the Task Force for Child Survival and Development. She currently serves as a White House appointee to the United States Information Agency, in the role of Director of Citizen Exchange.

# # #

04/08/97 TUE 08:56 FAX TO 94565558 P002/002
04-07-97 11:59AM FROM SENATOR KENNEDY

from the office of

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

of Massachusetts

STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON THE APPOINTMENT OF SANDY THURMAN TO BE THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

For Immediate Release
April 7, 1997

Contact: Jim Manley
(202)224-2633

Sandy's appointment as the new White House AIDS Czar is just what the doctor ordered. Sandy is a talented, committed, and courageous leader who has been on the front lines of the battle against AIDS since the beginning.

Sandy does not shy away from difficult challenges -- she thrives on them. From community based AIDS organizations to corporate board rooms to Congress, she knows how to bring people together and get the job done. I'm delighted she has agreed to this all-important effort. She's an ideal general for our modern war on AIDS.

SF AIDS FOUNDATION

NEWS RELEASE

1-page FAX To: Assignment Editors (Health/AIDS)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeff De Lucio-Brock (415) 487-3072
Pager (415) 280-0223

AIDS CZAR APPOINTMENT

MEANINGFUL RESPONSIBILITY AND CLOSE ACCESS TO PRESIDENT NECESSARY TO TACKLE DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE EPIDEMIC

S.F. AIDS FOUNDATION APPLAUDS TODAY'S APPOINTMENT OF SANDRA THURMAN

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, APRIL 7, 1997 -- The San Francisco AIDS Foundation applauds the appointment today of Sandra Thurman as the country's new AIDS czar and calls on President Clinton to grant her the access and authority she will need to tackle the dramatic new changes in the epidemic.

"President Clinton must grant the new AIDS czar access, responsibility and delegation of meaningful authority," says San Francisco AIDS Foundation Executive Director Pat Christen, who was on a short list of finalists for the position. "Only with such authority can Sandra Thurman effectively face the dramatic changes taking place in managing and ending the HIV epidemic -- particularly the advent of the genuinely hopeful protease inhibitor drugs that will revolutionize the way AIDS services and HIV prevention programs are delivered."

Thurman and Christen have collaborated on the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief, a coalition of the nation's largest metropolitan areas funded under Title I of the Ryan White CARE Act. Thurman, a member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, served as executive director of AID Atlanta, the southeast's first and largest AIDS service organization.

"Sandy is an intelligent, articulate and compassionate AIDS advocate," Christen said. "Her understanding of the complexity of AIDS issues makes her an invaluable resource in the development of national AIDS policy."

* * *

The San Francisco AIDS Foundation -- a non-profit, community-based AIDS service organization at the forefront of the battle against HIV disease since 1982 -- provides direct services to thousands of clients, mounts HIV prevention campaigns, coordinates more than 400 volunteers, operates a trilingual AIDS crisis and referral hotline, advocates for humane HIV-related public policies, and distributes AIDS treatment information worldwide.

# # #

NAPWA's Statement on the Appointment of Sandra Thurman

NAPWA

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS

April 7, 1997

The National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) commends the President on his strong appointment of a longstanding member of the AIDS community to the White House Office of National AIDS Policy.

We at NAPWA are committed to working with Ms. Thurman and this Administration to end the AIDS epidemic. We encourage the President to ensure that Ms. Thurman and the office have the resources required and his personal support necessary for success.

1413 K Street, N.W.,
Washington D.C. 20005
Phone: (202) 898-0414
FAX: (202) 898-0435

04/08/97 TUE 08:57 FAX
04/07/97 MON 11:41 FAX 202 789 4277 CAEAR Coalition

CAEAR
CITIES ADVOCATING EMERGENCY AIDS RELIEF

Contact: H. Alexander Robinson,
Administrator of Federal Affairs
202.789.3565

CAEAR Applauds the President on the Appointment of Sandra Thurman to White House Post

April 7, 1997

The Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition applauds the President on his appointment of Sandra Thurman to Director of the White House Office on AIDS Policy.

Sandra Thurman, a national AIDS community leader, and former Vice Chair of the CAEAR Coalition, has what takes to lead America on HIV issues. Her background as an AIDS activist, administrator, and policy leader give her necessary credentials to lead America to better treatments, care and ultimately a cure for HIV disease.

The CAEAR Coalition has witnessed first hand her tenacity, strength of character and excellent grasp of complex policy issues, in her ongoing efforts to assure that people living with HIV get the treatments, medical care, and social supports that they require as basic life needs.

We strongly support her appointment and look forward to continuing our close working relationship with Ms. Thurman and others at the White House as together we struggle to adapt to the ever changing spectrum of HIV disease and fight for a cure to AIDS worldwide.

The CAEAR Coalition
1413 K Street N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005

202 789 3565
202 789 4277 fax

Executive Committee
Ernest Hopkins, *Chair*
Suzi Rodriguez, *Vice Chair*
Robert Rybicki, *Treasurer*
Jacqueline Mayhar, *Secretary*

CITY OF ATLANTA NEWS RELEASE

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April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT CLINTON NAMES SANDRA THURMAN AIDS CZAR
Mayor Campbell applauds her appointment

President Bill Clinton today appointed Atlanta native Sandra L. Thurman the nation's AIDS Policy Director. The announcement was made at a White House ceremony.

"Sandra Thurman has been a good friend and will be a tremendous asset to President Clinton and his administration in moving forward the nation's AIDS agenda," said Mayor Bill Campbell. "Sandra has a long history of commitment to Atlanta's AIDS community as well as the nation's. She is a goal oriented and results driven individual who I know will make significant progress in better informing our nation about the AIDS epidemic."

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On World AIDS Day in 1994, Mayor Campbell hosted the first Mayor's Conference on AIDS in the Workplace. More than 400 business and labor leaders participated in the conference, and "thanks to Sandra Thurman and the support of her constituents in the AIDS community the conference was a great success," added Mayor Campbell.

# # #

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

1101 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20005
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News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, April 7, 1997

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Combines Leadership Skills, Commitment, Access

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"Thurman was intricately involved in the creation and enactment of the Ryan White CARE Act in 1990 and its reauthorization in 1996," said Stachelberg, who is a member of the executive committee of the umbrella group National Organizations Responding to AIDS. "She knows AIDS policy and politics from the inside--a critical combination of skills for this job."

Thurman becomes the third person to hold the position known informally as the national AIDS czar. She replaces Patsy Fleming, who stepped down after President Clinton's re-election.

Thurman, a native of Atlanta, is past executive director of AID Atlanta, the Southeast's first and largest AIDS service provider. Under her stewardship, AID Atlanta tripled in size, becoming a multimillion-dollar direct service agency with 90 staffers and more than 1,000 volunteers, serving thousands of individuals and families with HIV and AIDS.

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Thurman's AIDS-related activities include serving on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS; the Georgia State AIDS Task Force; the Fulton County HIV Planning Council; and the executive committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief.

Clinton Chooses a Georgian To Head AIDS Policy Office

WASHINGTON, April 7 (AP) — Pledging an open door to an adviser who "speaks the truth unvarnished," President Clinton today named an Atlanta woman active in the fight against AIDS, Sandy Thurman, as his third director of AIDS policy.

In a brief ceremony in the Roosevelt Room, Mr. Clinton restated his commitment to halt the spread of AIDS and assured Ms. Thurman that the Office of National AIDS Policy would have the resources to help "succeed in this all-important task."

"My door is open to her," Mr. Clinton said. "I've worked with her, and I can attest she tells it like it is. She speaks the truth unvarnished. She won't hold back in this office."

Ms. Thurman, who was born in Atlanta and is on the President's AIDS advisory panel, succeeds Patsy Fleming. Ms. Thurman pledged to improve housing, Medicaid and welfare services for AIDS patients and to "counteract the devastating effects that homophobia and racism continue to have on this epidemic."

"The President has given me his personal commitment," she said, "and in turn I offer the community my commitment to the efforts to develop vaccines, to find a cure, to stop the transmission of H.I.V. This is not an epidemic of a few. This is an epidemic of us all."

Ms. Thurman was executive director of AID Atlanta from 1988 to 1993 and director of a panel on child survival and development for the Carter Center from 1993 to last year.

Some advocacy groups cheered the appointment. The Human Rights Campaign, a gay and lesbian group, called Ms. Thurman "a solid choice to take the Office of National AIDS Policy to the next level."

AIDS Action, a coalition of 1,400 groups, said the appointment was an important step. "We hope that this first step is followed by a significant investment in staff and budget," said the executive director of the group, Daniel Zingale.

But Act Up said Mr. Clinton should have selected a person with greater name recognition and criticized Ms. Thurman, a friend of James Carville, the Democratic strategist, as a candidate of patronage.

"I want someone real in that job," said a spokesman for Act Up, Steve Michael. "It's absolutely impossible she will evolve to that. This person is going to fail just like the last one did. There is no reason for us to work with her."

Ms. Thurman said that she could understand the desire for a high-profile leader, but that her experience and associations with Administration officials went a long way.

"I have a lot of relationships in this White House and in this Administration," she said, "that are going to make a tremendous difference."

New AIDS Drug Gets Approval

WASHINGTON, April 7 (AP) — The Food and Drug Administration has approved a new AIDS drug for patients to add to their complex medication cocktails, despite conflicting evidence on how well it works.

The drug, delavirdine from Pharmacia and Upjohn, was approved on Friday. It is expected to be on pharmacy shelves within a month under the brand name Rescriptor.

Delavirdine is one of a class of drugs called non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors. They are not considered nearly as powerful as the protease inhibitors that are making headlines for dramatically fighting H.I.V., the virus that causes AIDS.

Delavirdine can be used with other medicines, but never alone, to treat AIDS patients and those newly infected with H.I.V., Pharmacia said today.

The F.D.A.'s scientific advisers deadlocked in November over whether to approve delavirdine because of conflicting data.

One study showed that delavirdine taken with the drug AZT modestly helped early-stage patients' immune systems and killed twice as much of their H.I.V. as did AZT alone. But a study of severely ill patients found that the benefit lasted only 12 weeks when they took delavirdine with an older medicine, ddI.

Pharmacia has not yet studied delavirdine taken with protease inhibitors. A drug combination that includes a protease inhibitor is considered the standard of care for AIDS patients.

The drug's main side effect is a skin rash.

Pharmacia warned that delavirdine can raise blood levels of one protease inhibitor, indinavir, so patients trying such a cocktail may need adjusted doses.

Delavirdine's wholesale price will be $2,250 a year, the company said.

THE WASHINGTON POST

President Selects New AIDS Adviser

Longtime Atlanta Activist Had Led Organization

Associated Press

President Clinton yesterday selected the former director of an Atlanta AIDS organization to be his AIDS adviser, saying the nation must continue striving toward a cure for the deadly virus.

Clinton chose Sandy Thurman as head of the Office of AIDS Policy, calling her a person "who tells it like it is. She speaks the truth unvarnished. She won't hold back in this office. She is passionate. She is committed. She is difficult to say no to."

In a brief Roosevelt Room ceremony, Thurman told Clinton, "The epidemic is not over and we must not—will not—rest until HIV is eradicated."

"This is not an epidemic of a few," she said. "This is an epidemic of us all."

Thurman is a longtime AIDS activist and member of the president's AIDS advisory panel. She served as executive director of AID Atlanta from 1988 to 1993 and as director of a task force on child survival and development for The Carter Center from 1993 to 1996.

Thurman is also director of citizen exchanges at the U.S. Information Agency.

She will replace Eric Goosby, who succeeded Patricia S. Fleming and Kristine M. Gebbie.

The Washington Times
** TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 1997 / PAGE A3

New AIDS czar touts needle-exchange plans

Will urge president to 'follow the science'

By Paul Bedard
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Clinton's new AIDS czar yesterday cited "strong scientific evidence" to support distribution of free hypodermic needles to drug addicts to fight the disease — an indication she will push the White House to lift the ban on funding such programs.

Sandra L. Thurman, an Atlanta AIDS-service administrator, said studies show that needle-exchange programs don't promote drug use and cut down on the spread of the virus.

Speaking to reporters after her appointment during a Roosevelt Room ceremony, Miss Thurman, 43, said she would seek to strip the political controversy from federal funding of needle-exchange programs.

"The best thing is to follow the science," she said in a reference to a new Health and Human Services Department report that declared that needle exchanges combat HIV transmission by helping drug addicts avoid sharing needles in favor of new, free needles handed out by governments.

While not pledging to ask the president to lift the federal funding ban on needle programs, Miss Thurman said that as director of the Office of National AIDS Policy she would promote the scientific evidence and urge the "president to act on the science."

The president has the authority to lift the ban once the administration certifies that needle-exchange programs are effective in reducing HIV and don't boost drug use.

There are 111 needle-exchange programs in the country, but Mr. Clinton has avoided the issue so far, leaning in favor of opponents who fear that making needles available will boost drug use — a view discounted by the HHS study.

Mr. Clinton praised his third AIDS czar, a Democratic activist and former executive director of AID Atlanta, a service institution similar to Washington's Whitman-Walker Clinic.

"She's worked on the front lines of the AIDS epidemic for more than a decade. She's been an advocate and a catalyst at the state, local and national levels," the president said.

"I've worked with her and I can attest, she tells it like it is, she speaks the truth unvarnished, she won't hold back in this office. . . . She is difficult to say no to."

In a move long sought by AIDS activists, Mr. Clinton plans to give Miss Thurman an office inside the White House complex. Previous AIDS czars have been located elsewhere, leading many activists to claim that they were too far from the Oval Office to have any clout.

While most major AIDS activist groups loudly applauded Mr. Clinton, his policies have come under attack for not going far enough to make good on his 1992 campaign promise to build a Manhattan Project-style effort to find a cure.

Asked about his failure to do so, the president said: "If I had told you in 1993 in January, when I was inaugurated, that we would have eight new AIDS drugs for AIDS-related conditions, that the number of AIDS-related deaths would be going down, and that the quality and length of life expectancy would expand as much as it had — you would think that we had put a pretty good amount of effort in here with a 60 percent increase in our investment. So I think we're moving forward."

Miss Thurman said she would focus on prevention and providing services to groups hit hardest by the virus.

SANDRA L. THURMAN
Director, Office of National AIDS Policy

Born: July 9, 1953, in Atlanta.

Education: Bachelor's degree, Mercer University, Macon, Ga.

Career highlights: Executive director, AID Atlanta, a community-based organization that provides health and support services to people with HIV and AIDS, 1988-93; director of advocacy programs, Task Force for Child Survival and Development, Carter Center, Atlanta, 1993-96; director of citizen exchanges, U.S. Information Agency, current.

Other: Member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV-AIDS, the Georgia State AIDS Task Force, the Fulton County HIV Planning Council and the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief. Served on the board of directors of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition, AID Atlanta, Sisterlove Inc. and the Atlanta AIDS Interfaith Network.

Source: White House Press Office

The Washington Times

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
DURING ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW AIDS DIRECTOR

The Roosevelt Room

2:25 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. I'd like to join the Vice President in thanking Eric Goosby for his work as the acting director of the office. And thank you very much, Patsy Fleming, for the fine job that you've done. We miss you. Thank you, Scott Hitt and all the members of the council, for the good work that you have been doing. And thank you, especially, for the meeting we had together not so very long ago, and the candor and passion of your recommendations.

America has not beaten AIDS yet, but we are getting closer and we remain committed to the fight, and to winning it. More than ever, we need a strong advocate for people with AIDS, and of course that's why we're here today. Let me begin by reiterating our goal: We want to find a vaccine against the AIDS virus and a cure for those who have HIV infection. They have eluded researchers so far, but we are committed -- the work goes on. And it will go on until we are successful.

Until that day comes when HIV and AIDS no longer threaten our people, we must continue to do all we can to hit the epidemic hard with a coordinated effort of research, treatment, and prevention.

When I took office, I established the Office of National AIDS Policy because America had been turning its head away from the problem. Many Americans had not come to grips with HIV and AIDS, and their consequences. Now we're learning. AIDS strikes in the best of families, and from this disease no community has immunity -- gay or straight, black or white, male or

female, old or young. Anyone can get AIDS. And if we're going to win this fight, we must begin with the acceptance of that fact.

It was clear four years ago, as it is now, that it is only with an aggressive campaign against AIDS that we will win the battle. That is what we have begun. In the first four years, we increased overall spending by about 60 percent. In FY 1997 alone, $167 million will go to state AIDS drug assistance programs which provide access to medication, including protease inhibitors for low-income individuals with HIV who don't have prescription drug coverage.

We speeded the time needed to approve drugs to treat AIDS, leading to the approval of eight new AIDS drugs and 19 for AIDS-related conditions. This has allowed many people simply to go on with their lives, to live with this disease not worry free, but not in despair either.

We should all take heart that for the first time there has been a marked decrease in deaths among people with AIDS. With new treatment therapies, we hope to see even greater life expectancy. And with education and prevention, the number of estimated new HIV infections has slowed dramatically.

In our war against AIDS, the Office of National AIDS Policy plays an important role. The office is charged with coordinating all our federal policy and programs regarding AIDS. It also builds our partnerships with other levels of government and with private-sector communities, and organizations. Our office is charged with keeping us on track in treatment and in education and to keep our focus on research for ways to prevent and cure this disease. An AIDS vaccine could save millions of lives around the world. And we must help those who are already infected. Make no mistake, a cure has been and always will be our very first priority.

The Director of this office must be an individual with a clear understanding of AIDS as a disease and as a social issue in America, someone who knows the scientific front as well as the human center of AIDS, someone who knows how to fight to cut through red tape to get the job done.

I have found that person in the woman I nominate today to fill this office, Sandy Thurman. She is no stranger to those who know this issue. She's a member of our Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS. She's worked on the front lines of the AIDS epidemic for more than a decade. She's been an advocate and a catalyst at the state, local and national levels. She transformed AID Atlanta, the oldest and largest AIDS service organization in the south into one of the most successful projects of its kind anywhere in the country. As Executive Director from 1988 to 1993, she tripled its size, beefed up its budget, and made it a direct service agency with a staff of 90 workers and 1,000 volunteers.

Her experience in running a large community-based organization makes her especially well equipped to build the partnerships we need throughout our country, for beating the AIDS epidemic will take this kind of teamwork everywhere. I am pleased that she has agreed to serve as the Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. I've worked with her and I can attest, she tells it like it is, she speaks the truth unvarnished, she won't hold back in this office. (Laughter and applause.) She is passionate. She is committed. She is difficult to say no to. (Laughter.) And I have already assured her that she will have the support and the resources she will need, including my personal support, to succeed in this all-important task. My door is open to her.

And now I'd like for us to all hear what she has to say. Sandy Thurman. (Applause.)

MS. THURMAN: Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President. Your being here together is a wonderful demonstration of your support for me and the administration's commitment to ending the AIDS crisis. I'm delighted to be joined today by my wonderful colleagues from the Presidential Advisory COuncil on HIV and AIDS and so many very special friends with whom I've worked the last 13 years in trying to end this epidemic.

Mr. President, I certainly share your commitment to a cure and note that extraordinary recent advances in medical treatments have given us a reason for real new hope to ending this plague.

But as we all know, this is a crisis of monumental proportion, and it will take -- it must be addressed, and will take all of our vigor and energy that we can muster to make progress. The epidemic is not over, and we must not and will not rest until HIV is eradicated.

Today, I would like to ask all of those living with HIV and with AIDS, the community of care-givers and care-providers, AIDS activists like you all, local and national AIDS organizations, and all of the federal agencies to join with the President, the Vice President, and with me in an even stronger partnership. Only by working together will we have a chance to successfully meet the challenges that this very complicated epidemic presents to us.

The President has given me his personal commitment to leadership in the fight against AIDS. And in turn, I offer the community my commitment to the efforts to develop vaccines, to find a cure, to stop the transmission of HIV, and to provide appropriate services and care to people who are already infected.

We will work to improve the level of services and housing for those most in need in our society while assessing the implications of changes in social programs like welfare and Medicaid.

We will strive to support culturally appropriate services and prevention messages to communities of color, to women, and to young gay men, where this epidemic is moving the fastest.

We will work to counteract the devastating effects that homophobia and that racism continue to have on this epidemic. (Applause.) And as you all know, this is not work that is done in a vacuum by me or by those in Washington here; it is work done by the thousands of people that are dedicated and selfless in communities across the country who struggle day by day to make a difference in this epidemic.

Our job here is to make certain that they have the tools to do their good work. I am heartened that, in that same spirit, the President has made a substantial effort to strengthen the Office of National AIDS Policy. We will be working to build an enhanced staff with a broad range of skills, and we will enlist those who best understand medical and treatment issues, prevention and education, social programs, discrimination, and housing to share their expertise. And I might add, that would be all of you. (Laughter.)

We have the highest level of access to the administration; I think that's evidenced here today. This is another reflection of the President's and the Vice President's commitment to our nation's war on HIV and AIDS.

This is not an epidemic of a few; this is an epidemic of us all. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have already lost their lives to AIDS. It has stolen some of our brightest and most talented friends and loved ones in the prime of their lives. And beyond our borders, millions of people struggle against the odds to live long enough to reap the benefits of a cure.

We are deeply aware of responsibility that this administration has to all Americans who are living with HIV and AIDS and to those all around the world who turn to us for leadership and for hope. That is an awesome responsibility, one which will demand that each of us work together in partnership to end this epidemic. I look forward to that partnership and appreciate this opportunity to offer whatever help I can to the President, to the nation, and to all of you who are working so valiantly on the front lines of this epidemic. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Q Mr. President, how do you see this czar being different from your two previous czars? What would you like to see changes? And have you given up on the so-called "Manhattan-style" project that you promised in '92?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, I think if you look at -- let me answer the second question first. If I had told you in 1993 in January, when I was inaugurated, that we would have eight new AIDS drugs for AIDS-related conditions, that the number of AIDS related deaths would be going down, and that the quality and length of life expectancy would expand as much as it

had -- you would think that we had put a pretty good amount of effort in here with a 60 percent increase in our investment.

So I think we're moving forward. What I would like to see is to rely on the President's Advisory Council and the AIDS office even more heavily to mobilize even more people to have support for the work we're doing and research to find a cure and also to do more at the grassroots level and to tie the efforts at the community level to what we're trying to do nationally. And I think that Sandy will do a very good job of that because of her personal experience in Atlanta.

Q Mr. President, when you read --

Q Mr. President, do you think you've made any progress, sir, in your meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu? Do you think that you've been able to move the peace process closer to being back on track as you put it earlier?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we had quite a long meeting, as you know. What are we, an hour late staring here? (Laughter.) And I apologize to you for that, but it was necessary that we continue the meeting. It was a long and very thorough meeting. Now it's important for us to visit with the Palestinians, and we'll try to get this thing up and going again.

But you know how these things are -- it's -- I need to say not too much about it and work very hard on it. And that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to do my best to get it back on track.

Q But Mr. President, Mr. President, did anything -- part of the Palestinian frustration is that the Prime Minister says he wants to speed up final status talks. His position -- according to them -- appears to be final. I was wondering if you saw any change in that position?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm -- again, I think the problem is the more I comment, the more I undermine the chances of success. We had a very specific, frank, candid, and long talk. And now we're going to talk to the Palestinians and see whether there is something we can do to get this going again. And we'll do our very best, and I'll do my best. That's all I think I should say right now.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

END 2:40 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT NAMES SANDRA L. THURMAN
AS DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

The President today announced his intention to appoint Sandra L. Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy.

For more than a decade, Ms. Thurman has been a leader and advocate for people with AIDS at the local, state, and federal levels.

From 1988 to 1993, Sandra L. Thurman, of Atlanta, Georgia, served as the Executive Director of AID Atlanta, a community based organization which provides health and support services to people with HIV/AIDS and offers an array of HIV prevention programs. Under her leadership, AID Atlanta, the largest and oldest AIDS service organization in the south, tripled in size and became a multi-million dollar, direct-service agency with 90 staff members and over 1000 volunteers.

From 1993 to 1996, Ms. Thurman was the Director of Advocacy Programs at The Task Force for Child Survival and Development at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. As Director, she focused on the global health concerns of children, including immunization and the eradication of polio. She is currently Director of Citizen Exchanges at the United States Information Agency.

Ms. Thurman is a Member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and of the Georgia State AIDS Task Force, the Fulton County HIV Planning Council and the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR). She has served on the Board of Directors of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition, AID Atlanta, Sisterlove, Inc., and the Atlanta AIDS Interfaith Network, among others. She is a recognized expert on AIDS issues and has provided testimony before the United States Senate, the White House Conference on HIV/AIDS and the National Commission on AIDS. Ms. Thurman earned a Bachelor's degree from Mercer University.

The Office of National AIDS Policy is responsible for coordinating federal policy and programs on HIV/AIDS, and with building partnerships between Federal agencies, the AIDS community, AIDS service providers, state and local officials, and major business leaders. The objective of the Office of National AIDS Policy is to increase the rate of progress in treatment and education, and to maintain the focus on science and scientific research.

THE KING CENTER

CORETTA SCOTT KING
founder

DEXTER SCOTT KING
Chairman, President and
Chief Executive Officer

CHRISTINE KING FARRIS
Vice Chair, Treasurer

ALVIN GOLDSTEIN
Vice Chair

CLARICE A. KING
Secretary

Ms. Sandy Thurman
c/o Sheridan Group
1808 Swann St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20009

Fax: (202) 483-1964

Dear Ms. Thurman

On behalf of the King family, Dexter Scott King and the King Center family, I write to add my congratulations to the many you are receiving on being appointed as U.S. AIDS Czar.

President Clinton has chosen wisely in selecting you for this important post, for you have demonstrated exceptional vision, dedication and leadership in the struggle against AIDS.

I look forward to your stewardship of the national effort to prevent the spread of AIDS, to secure quality medical care for its many victims and to fund the research needed to eradicate this scourge from our nation and world. In this endeavor, you have my support, and I wish you the greatest success in your mission.

In closing, let me just say how gratifying it is that one who has worked so hard in this important cause will be providing leadership in developing national AIDS policy in the years ahead. With faith in your commitment and prayers for your success, I look forward to hearing of your accomplishments in the future.

Sincerely,

Coretta Scott King

Coretta Scott King

AID Atlanta
1438 West Peachtree St. NW
Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30309-2955
Office: 404-872-0600
Fax: 404-885-6798

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 7, 1997
From: AID Atlanta 1438 West Peachtree St NW Ste 100 Atlanta 30309
Contact: Mark King, Director of Education and Communications
(404) 872-0600 ext. 215
kingm@aidatlanta.org

Former AID Atlanta Director Named Clinton's "AIDS Czar"

(Atlanta - April 7) At a White House ceremony this afternoon, President Clinton will name former AID Atlanta executive director Sandra Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. The position, commonly known as "AIDS Czar," is in charge of developing a national response to the disease, which has killed well over half a million Americans.

Thurman has a clear picture of her immediate priorities. "We first must reinvigorate the AIDS Policy Office," she said. "And there are two aspects to this. First, we must establish an effective relationship with the AIDS community. I'd like to form a 'kitchen cabinet' of people who have worked in AIDS for the past decade. In this respect I envision the office as a battle station for the community to bring their concerns and help influence public policy. The second aspect is to establish a stronger front at the White House. The President has listened to my concerns about this, and has moved the Directors' office into the White House complex, which should allow the director to keep HIV issues on the forefront of the national conscience, reminding the administration of the importance of AIDS issues."

Thurman has worked in direct services for people with AIDS for a number of years, and this perspective is a strong component of her attitude toward the disease. "I have an understanding of what it takes to work in the front lines in the battle against AIDS," she said. "For 13 years I've worked as a volunteer helping people with AIDS on an individual basis, and as an administrator. This privilege has allowed me to hear and understand the needs of the community, because I've been there. This is not simply policy for me" she adds. "This is personal."

Thurman joined the staff of AID Atlanta, which has provided service and support for people with AIDS since 1982, as Director of Public Affairs in 1988. In 1989 she became the agency's executive director, and served until 1993, when she left for the Carter Center to become Director of Advocacy Programs for the Task Force for Child Survival and Development. She currently serves as a White House appointee to the United States Information Agency, in the role of Director of Citizen Exchange.

# # #

from the office of

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

of Massachusetts

STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON THE APPOINTMENT OF SANDY THURMAN TO BE THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

For Immediate Release
April 7, 1997

Contact: Jim Manley
(202)224-2633

Sandy's appointment as the new White House AIDS Czar is just what the doctor ordered. Sandy is a talented, committed, and courageous leader who has been on the front lines of the battle against AIDS since the beginning.

Sandy does not shy away from difficult challenges -- she thrives on them. From community based AIDS organizations to corporate board rooms to Congress, she knows how to bring people together and get the job done. I'm delighted she has agreed to this all-important effort. She's an ideal general for our modern war on AIDS.

SF AIDS FOUNDATION

NEWS RELEASE

1-page FAX To: Assignment Editors (Health/AIDS)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeff De Lucio-Brock (415) 487-3072
Pager (415) 280-0223

AIDS CZAR APPOINTMENT

MEANINGFUL RESPONSIBILITY AND CLOSE ACCESS TO PRESIDENT NECESSARY TO TACKLE DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE EPIDEMIC

S.F. AIDS FOUNDATION APPLAUDS TODAY'S APPOINTMENT OF SANDRA THURMAN

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, APRIL 7, 1997 -- The San Francisco AIDS Foundation applauds the appointment today of Sandra Thurman as the country's new AIDS czar and calls on President Clinton to grant her the access and authority she will need to tackle the dramatic new changes in the epidemic.

"President Clinton must grant the new AIDS czar access, responsibility and delegation of meaningful authority," says San Francisco AIDS Foundation Executive Director Pat Christen, who was on a short list of finalists for the position. "Only with such authority can Sandra Thurman effectively face the dramatic changes taking place in managing and ending the HIV epidemic -- particularly the advent of the genuinely hopeful protease inhibitor drugs that will revolutionize the way AIDS services and HIV prevention programs are delivered."

Thurman and Christen have collaborated on the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief, a coalition of the nation's largest metropolitan areas funded under Title I of the Ryan White CARE Act. Thurman, a member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, served as executive director of AID Atlanta, the southeast's first and largest AIDS service organization.

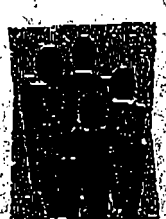
"Sandy is an intelligent, articulate and compassionate AIDS advocate," Christen said. "Her understanding of the complexity of AIDS issues makes her an invaluable resource in the development of national AIDS policy."

* * *

The San Francisco AIDS Foundation -- a non-profit, community-based AIDS service organization at the forefront of the battle against HIV disease since 1982 -- provides direct services to thousands of clients, mounts HIV prevention campaigns, coordinates more than 400 volunteers, operates a trilingual AIDS crisis and referral hotline, advocates for humane HIV-related public policies, and distributes AIDS treatment information worldwide.

# # #

NAPWA's Statement on the Appointment of Sandra Thurman



NAPWA

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS

April 7, 1997

The National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) commends the President on his strong appointment of a longstanding member of the AIDS community to the White House Office of National AIDS Policy.

We at NAPWA are committed to working with Ms. Thurman and this Administration to end the AIDS epidemic. We encourage the President to ensure that Ms. Thurman and the office have the resources required and his personal support necessary for success.

1413 K Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20005
Phone: (202) 898-0414
FAX: (202) 898-0435

CAEAR
CITIES ADVOCATING EMERGENCY AIDS RELIEF

Contact: H. Alexander Robinson,
Administrator of Federal Affairs
202.789.3565

CAEAR Applauds the President on the Appointment of Sandra Thurman to White House Post

April 7, 1997

The Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition applauds the President on his appointment of Sandra Thurman to Director of the White House Office on AIDS Policy.

Sandra Thurman, a national AIDS community leader, and former Vice Chair of the CAEAR Coalition, has what takes to lead America on HIV issues. Her background as an AIDS activist, administrator, and policy leader give her necessary credentials to lead America to better treatments, care and ultimately a cure for HIV disease.

The CAEAR Coalition has witnessed first hand her tenacity, strength of character and excellent grasp of complex policy issues, in her ongoing efforts to assure that people living with HIV get the treatments, medical care, and social supports that they require as basic life needs.

We strongly support her appointment and look forward to continuing our close working relationship with Ms. Thurman and others at the White House as together we struggle to adapt to the ever changing spectrum of HIV disease and fight for a cure to AIDS worldwide.

The CAEAR Coalition
1413 K Street N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005

202 789 3565
202 789 4277 fax

Executive Committee
Ernest Hopkins, *Chair*
Suzi Rodriguez, *Vice Chair*
Robert Rybicki, *Treasurer*
[illegible] Member, Southern

CITY OF ATLANTA NEWS RELEASE

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30335-0319
CONTACT: Nick Gold
(404) 330-6511 or pager
1-800-672-4861

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT CLINTON NAMES SANDRA THURMAN AIDS CZAR
Mayor Campbell applauds her appointment

President Bill Clinton today appointed Atlanta native Sandra L. Thurman the nation's AIDS Policy Director. The announcement was made at a White House ceremony.

"Sandra Thurman has been a good friend and will be a tremendous asset to President Clinton and his administration in moving forward the nation's AIDS agenda," said Mayor Bill Campbell. "Sandra has a long history of commitment to Atlanta's AIDS community as well as the nation's. She is a goal oriented and results driven individual who I know will make significant progress in better informing our nation about the AIDS epidemic."

Ms. Thurman has a long history of involvement in serving the AIDS community. In 1988 she joined AID Atlanta, the southeast's first and largest AIDS service organization, as the Director of Public Affairs. In 1989 she was named its Executive Director. Under her leadership, AID Atlanta tripled in size, becoming a multi-million dollar, direct-service agency with 90 staff members and over 1,000 volunteers.

On World AIDS Day in 1994, Mayor Campbell hosted the first Mayor's Conference on AIDS in the Workplace. More than 400 business and labor leaders participated in the conference, and **"thanks to Sandra Thurman and the support of her constituents in the AIDS community the conference was a great success," added Mayor Campbell.**

# # #

HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN

1101 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20005
Contact: Kim I. Mills
phone 202 628 4160
pager 800 386 5997

News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, April 7, 1997

THURMAN A STRONG CHOICE TO LEAD OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY, HRC SAYS

Combines Leadership Skills, Commitment, Access

WASHINGTON -- The Human Rights Campaign commended the selection today of Sandra L. Thurman as the new White House "AIDS czar."

"Sandra Thurman is a solid choice to take the Office of National AIDS Policy to the next level," said Elizabeth Birch, HRC's executive director. "She brings the right mix of leadership, political skills and commitment to the fight against HIV and AIDS."

Winnie Stachelberg, HRC's legislative director, said Thurman has the experience to design and execute the administration's programs in the changing struggle to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

"Thurman was intricately involved in the creation and enactment of the Ryan White CARE Act in 1990 and its reauthorization in 1996," said Stachelberg, who is a member of the executive committee of the umbrella group National Organizations Responding to AIDS. "She knows AIDS policy and politics from the inside--a critical combination of skills for this job."

Thurman becomes the third person to hold the position known informally as the national AIDS czar. She replaces Patsy Fleming, who stepped down after President Clinton's re-election.

Thurman, a native of Atlanta, is past executive director of AID Atlanta, the Southeast's first and largest AIDS service provider. Under her stewardship, AID Atlanta tripled in size, becoming a multimillion-dollar direct service agency with 90 staffers and more than 1,000 volunteers, serving thousands of individuals and families with HIV and AIDS.

Most recently, Thurman was a White House appointee to the U.S. Information Agency, responsible for cultural and professional exchange programs.

Thurman has a history of political and public service. In 1996, she held a variety of positions with the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton-Gore re-election campaign.

From 1993 to 1996, Thurman was director of advocacy programs at the Task Force for Child Survival and Development in Atlanta. The task force is sponsored by such respected organizations as UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Thurman's AIDS-related activities include serving on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS; the Georgia State AIDS Task Force; the Fulton County HIV Planning Council; and the executive committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief.

SANDRA L. THURMAN

Ms. Thurman currently directs the Advocacy Programs at The Task Force for Child Survival and Development at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The Task Force, which is sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), The World Bank, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and The Rockefeller Foundation, focuses on global health concerns of children. Specific areas of advocacy include immunization, acute respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, micronutrients (Vitamin A deficiency, iodine deficiency disorders, iron deficiency anemia), Guinea worm eradication, breastfeeding, safe motherhood initiatives, and the eradication of polio.

Prior to joining The Task Force for Child Survival and Development in August 1993, Ms. Thurman was Executive Director of AID Atlanta, the Southeast's largest and oldest community-based AIDS service organization.

Her involvement with AID Atlanta began in 1988 when she joined the agency as its Director of Public Affairs, bringing to the post an extensive background in public service, politics, marketing and communications. She was named AID Atlanta's Executive Director in 1989. During her tenure, the organization tripled in size to become a multi-million dollar agency with 90 staff and more than 1,000 active volunteers.

A native of Atlanta with a family history of political and public service which includes serving as Political Director for the Clinton Campaign in Georgia, Ms. Thurman's AIDS-related activities include membership on the Georgia State AIDS Task Force, the Fulton County HIV Planning Council and the Executive Committee of the coalition of cities funded under Title I of the Ryan White Care Act (CAEAR Coalition). Additionally, she serves on the Board of Directors of AID Atlanta, Sisterlove, Inc. and the Atlanta AIDS Interfaith Network. In June 1992, she was selected by the U.S. Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee to testify with Ms. Elizabeth Taylor on federal AIDS programs and priorities during the Committee's oversight hearings on the success of the Ryan White CARE Act. The National Commission on AIDS requested Ms. Thurman to present testimony in November 1992 on care, financing and social support for persons with AIDS. She was recently appointed by President Clinton to serve on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

Ms. Thurman currently serves on the Governor's Commission on Women, the Mayor's Council for Community Affairs, and the Advisory Commission for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. A graduate of Leadership Atlanta, she is a member of the International Women's Forum, and has served on the board of the National Kidney Foundation, the March of Dimes, Pets Are Loving Support, and the Atlanta Ballet Associates.

Prior to joining AID Atlanta, she held positions as the Public Affairs Director for AmeriPlan Health Services, Georgia's largest health maintenance organization (HMO), and as a job placement specialist working with ex-offenders at the Georgia Department of Labor, Correctional Services Division.

Ms. Thurman earned her bachelor's degree in human resources administration and management from Mercer University in Georgia.

She remains an active consultant on fundraising and development and on managing organizational change, growth and diversity for non-profit organizations and public charities.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT DURING ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW AIDS DIRECTOR

The Roosevelt Room

2:25 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. I'd like to join the Vice President in thanking Eric Goosby for his work as the acting director of the office. And thank you very much, Patsy Fleming, for the fine job that you've done. We miss you. Thank you, Scott Hitt and all the members of the council, for the good work that you have been doing. And thank you, especially, for the meeting we had together not so very long ago, and the candor and passion of your recommendations.

America has not beaten AIDS yet, but we are getting closer and we remain committed to the fight, and to winning it. More than ever, we need a strong advocate for people with AIDS, and of course that's why we're here today. Let me begin by reiterating our goal: We want to find a vaccine against the AIDS virus and a cure for those who have HIV infection. They have eluded researchers so far, but we are committed -- the work goes on. And it will go on until we are successful.

Until that day comes when HIV and AIDS no longer threaten our people, we must continue to do all we can to hit the epidemic hard with a coordinated effort of research, treatment, and prevention.

When I took office, I established the Office of National AIDS Policy because America had been turning its head away from the problem. Many Americans had not come to grips with HIV and AIDS, and their consequences. Now we're learning. AIDS strikes in the best of families, and from this disease no community has immunity -- gay or straight, black or white, male or

female, old or young. Anyone can get AIDS. And if we're going to win this fight, we must begin with the acceptance of that fact.

It was clear four years ago, as it is now, that it is only with an aggressive campaign against AIDS that we will win the battle. That is what we have begun. In the first four years, we increased overall spending by about 60 percent. In FY 1997 alone, $167 million will go to state AIDS drug assistance programs which provide access to medication, including protease inhibitors for low-income individuals with HIV who don't have prescription drug coverage.

We speeded the time needed to approve drugs to treat AIDS, leading to the approval of eight new AIDS drugs and 19 for AIDS-related conditions. This has allowed many people simply to go on with their lives, to live with this disease not worry free, but not in despair either.

We should all take heart that for the first time there has been a marked decrease in deaths among people with AIDS. With new treatment therapies, we hope to see even greater life expectancy. And with education and prevention, the number of estimated new HIV infections has slowed dramatically.

In our war against AIDS, the Office of National AIDS Policy plays an important role. The office is charged with coordinating all our federal policy and programs regarding AIDS. It also builds our partnerships with other levels of government and with private-sector communities, and organizations. Our office is charged with keeping us on track in treatment and in education and to keep our focus on research for ways to prevent and cure this disease. An AIDS vaccine could save millions of lives around the world. And we must help those who are already infected. Make no mistake, a cure has been and always will be our very first priority.

The Director of this office must be an individual with a clear understanding of AIDS as a disease and as a social issue in America, someone who knows the scientific front as well as the human center of AIDS, someone who knows how to fight to cut through red tape to get the job done.

I have found that person in the woman I nominate today to fill this office, Sandy Thurman. She is no stranger to those who know this issue. She's a member of our Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS. She's worked on the front lines of the AIDS epidemic for more than a decade. She's been an advocate and a catalyst at the state, local and national levels. She transformed AID Atlanta, the oldest and largest AIDS service organization in the south into one of the most successful projects of its kind anywhere in the country. As Executive Director from 1988 to 1993, she tripled its size, beefed up its budget, and made it a direct service agency with a staff of 90 workers and 1,000 volunteers.

Her experience in running a large community-based organization makes her especially well equipped to build the partnerships we need throughout our country, for beating the AIDS epidemic will take this kind of teamwork everywhere. I am pleased that she has agreed to serve as the Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. I've worked with her and I can attest, she tells it like it is, she speaks the truth unvarnished, she won't hold back in this office. (Laughter and applause.) She is passionate. She is committed. She is difficult to say no to. (Laughter.) And I have already assured her that she will have the support and the resources she will need, including my personal support, to succeed in this all-important task. My door is open to her.

And now I'd like for us to all hear what she has to say. Sandy Thurman.

(Applause.)

MS. THURMAN: Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President. Your being here together is a wonderful demonstration of your support for me and the administration's commitment to ending the AIDS crisis. I'm delighted to be joined today by my wonderful colleagues from the Presidential Advisory COuncil on HIV and AIDS and so many very special friends with whom I've worked the last 13 years in trying to end this epidemic.

Mr. President, I certainly share your commitment to a cure and note that extraordinary recent advances in medical treatments have given us a reason for real new hope to ending this plague.

But as we all know, this is a crisis of monumental proportion, and it will take -- it must be addressed, and will take all of our vigor and energy that we can muster to make progress. The epidemic is not over, and we must not and will not rest until HIV is eradicated.

Today, I would like to ask all of those living with HIV and with AIDS, the community of care-givers and care-providers, AIDS activists like you all, local and national AIDS organizations, and all of the federal agencies to join with the President, the Vice President, and with me in an even stronger partnership. Only by working together will we have a chance to successfully meet the challenges that this very complicated epidemic presents to us.

The President has given me his personal commitment to leadership in the fight against AIDS. And in turn, I offer the community my commitment to the efforts to develop vaccines, to find a cure, to stop the transmission of HIV, and to provide appropriate services and care to people who are already infected.

We will work to improve the level of services and housing for those most in need in our society while assessing the implications of changes in social programs like welfare and Medicaid.

We will strive to support culturally appropriate services and prevention messages to communities of color, to women, and to young gay men, where this epidemic is moving the fastest.

We will work to counteract the devastating effects that homophobia and that racism continue to have on this epidemic. (Applause.) And as you all know, this is not work that is done in a vacuum by me or by those in Washington here; it is work done by the thousands of people that are dedicated and selfless in communities across the country who struggle day by day to make a difference in this epidemic.

Our job here is to make certain that they have the tools to do their good work. I am heartened that, in that same spirit, the President has made a substantial effort to strengthen the Office of National AIDS Policy. We will be working to build an enhanced staff with a broad range of skills, and we will enlist those who best understand medical and treatment issues, prevention and education, social programs, discrimination, and housing to share their expertise. And I might add, that would be all of you. (Laughter.)

We have the highest level of access to the administration; I think that's evidenced here today. This is another reflection of the President's and the Vice President's commitment to our nation's war on HIV and AIDS.

This is not an epidemic of a few; this is an epidemic of us all. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have already lost their lives to AIDS. It has stolen some of our brightest and most talented friends and loved ones in the prime of their lives. And beyond our borders, millions of people struggle against the odds to live long enough to reap the benefits of a cure.

We are deeply aware of responsibility that this administration has to all Americans who are living with HIV and AIDS and to those all around the world who turn to us for leadership and for hope. That is an awesome responsibility, one which will demand that each of us work together in partnership to end this epidemic. I look forward to that partnership and appreciate this opportunity to offer whatever help I can to the President, to the nation, and to all of you who are working so valiantly on the front lines of this epidemic. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Q Mr. President, how do you see this czar being different from your two previous czars? What would you like to see changes? And have you given up on the so-called "Manhattan-style" project that you promised in '92?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, I think if you look at -- let me answer the second question first. If I had told you in 1993 in January, when I was inaugurated, that we would have eight new AIDS drugs for AIDS-related conditions, that the number of AIDS related deaths would be going down, and that the quality and length of life expectancy would expand as much as it

had -- you would think that we had put a pretty good amount of effort in here with a 60 percent increase in our investment.

So I think we're moving forward. What I would like to see is to rely on the President's Advisory Council and the AIDS office even more heavily to mobilize even more people to have support for the work we're doing and research to find a cure and also to do more at the grassroots level and to tie the efforts at the community level to what we're trying to do nationally. And I think that Sandy will do a very good job of that because of her personal experience in Atlanta.

Q Mr. President, when you read --

Q Mr. President, do you think you've made any progress, sir, in your meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu? Do you think that you've been able to move the peace process closer to being back on track as you put it earlier?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we had quite a long meeting, as you know. What are we, an hour late staring here? (Laughter.) And I apologize to you for that, but it was necessary that we continue the meeting. It was a long and very thorough meeting. Now it's important for us to visit with the Palestinians, and we'll try to get this thing up and going again.

But you know how these things are -- it's -- I need to say not too much about it and work very hard on it. And that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to do my best to get it back on track.

Q But Mr. President, Mr. President, did anything -- part of the Palestinian frustration is that the Prime Minister says he wants to speed up final status talks. His position -- according to them -- appears to be final. I was wondering if you saw any change in that position?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm -- again, I think the problem is the more I comment, the more I undermine the chances of success. We had a very specific, frank, candid, and long talk. And now we're going to talk to the Palestinians and see whether there is something we can do to get this going again. And we'll do our very best, and I'll do my best. That's all I think I should say right now.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

END 2:40 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT NAMES SANDRA L. THURMAN
AS DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

The President today announced his intention to appoint Sandra L. Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy.

For more than a decade, Ms. Thurman has been a leader and advocate for people with AIDS at the local, state, and federal levels.

From 1988 to 1993, Sandra L. Thurman, of Atlanta, Georgia, served as the Executive Director of AID Atlanta, a community based organization which provides health and support services to people with HIV/AIDS and offers an array of HIV prevention programs. Under her leadership, AID Atlanta, the largest and oldest AIDS service organization in the south, tripled in size and became a multi-million dollar, direct-service agency with 90 staff members and over 1000 volunteers.

From 1993 to 1996, Ms. Thurman was the Director of Advocacy Programs at The Task Force for Child Survival and Development at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. As Director, she focused on the global health concerns of children, including immunization and the eradication of polio. She is currently Director of Citizen Exchanges at the United States Information Agency.

Ms. Thurman is a Member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and of the Georgia State AIDS Task Force, the Fulton County HIV Planning Council and the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR). She has served on the Board of Directors of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition, AID Atlanta, Sisterlove, Inc., and the Atlanta AIDS Interfaith Network, among others. She is a recognized expert on AIDS issues and has provided testimony before the United States Senate, the White House Conference on HIV/AIDS and the National Commission on AIDS. Ms. Thurman earned a Bachelor's degree from Mercer University.

The Office of National AIDS Policy is responsible for coordinating federal policy and programs on HIV/AIDS, and with building partnerships between Federal agencies, the AIDS community, AIDS service providers, state and local officials, and major business leaders. The objective of the Office of National AIDS Policy is to increase the rate of progress in treatment and education, and to maintain the focus on science and scientific research.

THE KING CENTER

CORETTA SCOTT KING
founder

DEXTER SCOTT KING
Interim President and
Chief Executive Officer

CHRISTINE KING FARRIS
Co-Chair, Treasurer

ARVIN GOLDSTEIN
Co-Chair

BERNICE A. KING
Secretary

Ms. Sandy Thurman
c/o Sheridan Group
1808 Swann St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20009

Fax: (202) 483-1964

Dear Ms. Thurman

On behalf of the King family, Dexter Scott King and the King Center family, I write to add my congratulations to the many you are receiving on being appointed as U.S. AIDS Czar.

President Clinton has chosen wisely in selecting you for this important post, for you have demonstrated exceptional vision, dedication and leadership in the struggle against AIDS.

I look forward to your stewardship of the national effort to prevent the spread of AIDS, to secure quality medical care for its many victims and to fund the research needed to eradicate this scourge from our nation and world. In this endeavor, you have my support, and I wish you the greatest success in your mission.

In closing, let me just say how gratifying it is that one who has worked so hard in this important cause will be providing leadership in developing national AIDS policy in the years ahead. With faith in your commitment and prayers for your success, I look forward to hearing of your accomplishments in the future.

Sincerely,

Coretta Scott King

Coretta Scott King

AID Atlanta

1438 West Peachtree St., NW
Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30309-2955

Office: 404-872-0600
Fax: 404-885-6799

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 7, 1997
From: AID Atlanta 1438 West Peachtree St NW Ste 100 Atlanta 30309
Contact: Mark King, Director of Education and Communications
(404) 872-0600 ext. 215
kingm@aidatlanta.org

Former AID Atlanta Director Named Clinton's "AIDS Czar"

(Atlanta - April 7) At a White House ceremony this afternoon, President Clinton will name former AID Atlanta executive director Sandra Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. The position, commonly known as "AIDS Czar," is in charge of developing a national response to the disease, which has killed well over half a million Americans.

Thurman has a clear picture of her immediate priorities. "We first must reinvigorate the AIDS Policy Office," she said. "And there are two aspects to this. First, we must establish an effective relationship with the AIDS community. I'd like to form a 'kitchen cabinet' of people who have worked in AIDS for the past decade. In this respect I envision the office as a battle station for the community to bring their concerns and help influence public policy. The second aspect is to establish a stronger front at the White House. The President has listened to my concerns about this, and has moved the Directors' office into the White House complex, which should allow the director to keep HIV issues on the forefront of the national conscience, reminding the administration of the importance of AIDS issues."

Thurman has worked in direct services for people with AIDS for a number of years, and this perspective is a strong component of her attitude toward the disease. "I have an understanding of what it takes to work in the front lines in the battle against AIDS," she said. "For 13 years I've worked as a volunteer helping people with AIDS on an individual basis, and as an administrator. This privilege has allowed me to hear and understand the needs of the community, because I've been there. This is not simply policy for me" she adds. "This is personal."

Thurman joined the staff of AID Atlanta, which has provided service and support for people with AIDS since 1982, as Director of Public Affairs in 1988. In 1989 she became the agency's executive director, and served until 1993, when she left for the Carter Center to become Director of Advocacy Programs for the Task Force for Child Survival and Development. She currently serves as a White House appointee to the United States Information Agency, in the role of Director of Citizen Exchange.

# # #

04/08/97 TUE 08:56 FAX TO 94565558 P002/002
04-07-97 11:39AM FROM SENATOR KENNEDY

from the office of

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

of Massachusetts

STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON THE APPOINTMENT OF SANDY THURMAN TO BE THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

Contact: Jim Manley
(202)224-2633

For Immediate Release
April 7, 1997

Sandy's appointment as the new White House AIDS Czar is just what the doctor ordered. Sandy is a talented, committed, and courageous leader who has been on the front lines of the battle against AIDS since the beginning.

Sandy does not shy away from difficult challenges -- she thrives on them. From community based AIDS organizations to corporate board rooms to Congress, she knows how to bring people together and get the job done. I'm delighted she has agreed to this all-important effort. She's an ideal general for our modern war on AIDS.

SF AIDS FOUNDATION

NEWS RELEASE

1-page FAX To: Assignment Editors (Health/AIDS)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeff De Lucio-Brock (415) 487-3072
Pager (415) 280-0223

AIDS CZAR APPOINTMENT

MEANINGFUL RESPONSIBILITY AND CLOSE ACCESS TO PRESIDENT NECESSARY TO TACKLE DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE EPIDEMIC

S.F. AIDS FOUNDATION APPLAUDS TODAY'S APPOINTMENT OF SANDRA THURMAN

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, APRIL 7, 1997 -- The San Francisco AIDS Foundation applauds the appointment today of Sandra Thurman as the country's new AIDS czar and calls on President Clinton to grant her the access and authority she will need to tackle the dramatic new changes in the epidemic.

"President Clinton must grant the new AIDS czar access, responsibility and delegation of meaningful authority," says San Francisco AIDS Foundation Executive Director Pat Christen, who was on a short list of finalists for the position. "Only with such authority can Sandra Thurman effectively face the dramatic changes taking place in managing and ending the HIV epidemic -- particularly the advent of the genuinely hopeful protease inhibitor drugs that will revolutionize the way AIDS services and HIV prevention programs are delivered."

Thurman and Christen have collaborated on the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief, a coalition of the nation's largest metropolitan areas funded under Title I of the Ryan White CARE Act. Thurman, a member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, served as executive director of AID Atlanta, the southeast's first and largest AIDS service organization.

"Sandy is an intelligent, articulate and compassionate AIDS advocate," Christen said. "Her understanding of the complexity of AIDS issues makes her an invaluable resource in the development of national AIDS policy."

* * *

The San Francisco AIDS Foundation -- a non-profit, community-based AIDS service organization at the forefront of the battle against HIV disease since 1982 -- provides direct services to thousands of clients, mounts HIV prevention campaigns, coordinates more than 400 volunteers, operates a trilingual AIDS crisis and referral hotline, advocates for humane HIV-related public policies, and distributes AIDS treatment information worldwide.

# # #

04/08/97 TUE 08:57 FAX
04/07/97 MON 11:48 FAX 202 789 4277 CAEAR Coalition

NAPWA's Statement on the Appointment of Sandra Thurman

NAPWA

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS

April 7, 1997

The National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) commends the President on his strong appointment of a longstanding member of the AIDS community to the White House Office of National AIDS Policy.

We at NAPWA are committed to working with Ms. Thurman and this Administration to end the AIDS epidemic. We encourage the President to ensure that Ms. Thurman and the office have the resources required and his personal support necessary for success.

1413 K Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20005
Phone: (202) 898-0414

CAEAR
CITIES ADVOCATING EMERGENCY AIDS RELIEF

Contact: H. Alexander Robinson,
Administrator of Federal Affairs
202.789.3565

CAEAR Applauds the President on the Appointment of Sandra Thurman to White House Post

April 7, 1997

The Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition applauds the President on his appointment of Sandra Thurman to Director of the White House Office on AIDS Policy.

Sandra Thurman, a national AIDS community leader, and former Vice Chair of the CAEAR Coalition, has what takes to lead America on HIV issues. Her background as an AIDS activist, administrator, and policy leader give her necessary credentials to lead America to better treatments, care and ultimately a cure for HIV disease.

The CAEAR Coalition has witnessed first hand her tenacity, strength of character and excellent grasp of complex policy issues, in her ongoing efforts to assure that people living with HIV get the treatments, medical care, and social supports that they require as basic life needs.

We strongly support her appointment and look forward to continuing our close working relationship with Ms. Thurman and others at the White House as together we struggle to adapt to the ever changing spectrum of HIV disease and fight for a cure to AIDS worldwide.

The CAEAR Coalition
1413 K Street N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005

202 789 3565
202 789 4277 fax

Executive Committee
Ernest Hopkins, *Chair*
Suzi Rodriguez, *Vice Chair*
Robert Rybicki, *Treasurer*
Immediate Member, Southern

CITY OF ATLANTA NEWS RELEASE

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30335-0319
CONTACT: Nick Gold
(404) 330-6511 or pager
1-800-672-4861

April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT CLINTON NAMES SANDRA THURMAN AIDS CZAR
Mayor Campbell applauds her appointment

President Bill Clinton today appointed Atlanta native Sandra L. Thurman the nation's AIDS Policy Director. The announcement was made at a White House ceremony.

"Sandra Thurman has been a good friend and will be a tremendous asset to President Clinton and his administration in moving forward the nation's AIDS agenda," said Mayor Bill Campbell. "Sandra has a long history of commitment to Atlanta's AIDS community as well as the nation's. She is a goal oriented and results driven individual who I know will make significant progress in better informing our nation about the AIDS epidemic."

Ms. Thurman has a long history of involvement in serving the AIDS community. In 1988 she joined AID Atlanta, the southeast's first and largest AIDS service organization, as the Director of Public Affairs. In 1989 she was named its Executive Director. Under her leadership, AID Atlanta tripled in size, becoming a multi-million dollar, direct-service agency with 90 staff members and over 1,000 volunteers.

On World AIDS Day in 1994, Mayor Campbell hosted the first Mayor's Conference on AIDS in the Workplace. More than 400 business and labor leaders participated in the conference, and "thanks to Sandra Thurman and the support of her constituents in the AIDS community the conference was a great success," added Mayor Campbell.

# # #

HUMAN
RIGHTS
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News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, April 7, 1997

THURMAN A STRONG CHOICE TO LEAD OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY, HRC SAYS

Combines Leadership Skills, Commitment, Access

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"Sandra Thurman is a solid choice to take the Office of National AIDS Policy to the next level," said Elizabeth Birch, HRC's executive director. "She brings the right mix of leadership, political skills and commitment to the fight against HIV and AIDS."

Winnie Stachelberg, HRC's legislative director, said Thurman has the experience to design and execute the administration's programs in the changing struggle to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

"Thurman was intricately involved in the creation and enactment of the Ryan White CARE Act in 1990 and its reauthorization in 1996," said Stachelberg, who is a member of the executive committee of the umbrella group National Organizations Responding to AIDS. "She knows AIDS policy and politics from the inside--a critical combination of skills for this job."

Thurman becomes the third person to hold the position known informally as the national AIDS czar. She replaces Patsy Fleming, who stepped down after President Clinton's re-election.

Thurman, a native of Atlanta, is past executive director of AID Atlanta, the Southeast's first and largest AIDS service provider. Under her stewardship, AID Atlanta tripled in size, becoming a multimillion-dollar direct service agency with 90 staffers and more than 1,000 volunteers, serving thousands of individuals and families with HIV and AIDS.

Most recently, Thurman was a White House appointee to the U.S. Information Agency, responsible for cultural and professional exchange programs.

Thurman has a history of political and public service. In 1996, she held a variety of positions with the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton-Gore re-election campaign.

From 1993 to 1996, Thurman was director of advocacy programs at the Task Force for Child Survival and Development in Atlanta. The task force is sponsored by such respected organizations as UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Thurman's AIDS-related activities include serving on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS; the Georgia State AIDS Task Force; the Fulton County HIV Planning Council; and the executive committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1997

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The Roosevelt Room

2:25 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. I'd like to join the Vice President in thanking Eric Goosby for his work as the acting director of the office. And thank you very much, Patsy Fleming, for the fine job that you've done. We miss you. Thank you, Scott Hitt and all the members of the council, for the good work that you have been doing. And thank you, especially, for the meeting we had together not so very long ago, and the candor and passion of your recommendations.

America has not beaten AIDS yet, but we are getting closer and we remain committed to the fight, and to winning it. More than ever, we need a strong advocate for people with AIDS, and of course that's why we're here today. Let me begin by reiterating our goal: We want to find a vaccine against the AIDS virus and a cure for those who have HIV infection. They have eluded researchers so far, but we are committed -- the work goes on. And it will go on until we are successful.

Until that day comes when HIV and AIDS no longer threaten our people, we must continue to do all we can to hit the epidemic hard with a coordinated effort of research, treatment, and prevention.

When I took office, I established the Office of National AIDS Policy because America had been turning its head away from the problem. Many Americans had not come to grips with HIV and AIDS, and their consequences. Now we're learning. AIDS strikes in the best of families, and from this disease no community has immunity -- gay or straight, black or white, male or

female, old or young. Anyone can get AIDS. And if we're going to win this fight, we must begin with the acceptance of that fact.

It was clear four years ago, as it is now, that it is only with an aggressive campaign against AIDS that we will win the battle. That is what we have begun. In the first four years, we increased overall spending by about 60 percent. In FY 1997 alone, $167 million will go to state AIDS drug assistance programs which provide access to medication, including protease inhibitors for low-income individuals with HIV who don't have prescription drug coverage.

We speeded the time needed to approve drugs to treat AIDS, leading to the approval of eight new AIDS drugs and 19 for AIDS-related conditions. This has allowed many people simply to go on with their lives, to live with this disease not worry free, but not in despair either.

We should all take heart that for the first time there has been a marked decrease in deaths among people with AIDS. With new treatment therapies, we hope to see even greater life expectancy. And with education and prevention, the number of estimated new HIV infections has slowed dramatically.

In our war against AIDS, the Office of National AIDS Policy plays an important role. The office is charged with coordinating all our federal policy and programs regarding AIDS. It also builds our partnerships with other levels of government and with private-sector communities, and organizations. Our office is charged with keeping us on track in treatment and in education and to keep our focus on research for ways to prevent and cure this disease. An AIDS vaccine could save millions of lives around the world. And we must help those who are already infected. Make no mistake, a cure has been and always will be our very first priority.

The Director of this office must be an individual with a clear understanding of AIDS as a disease and as a social issue in America, someone who knows the scientific front as well as the human center of AIDS, someone who knows how to fight to cut through red tape to get the job done.

I have found that person in the woman I nominate today to fill this office, Sandy Thurman. She is no stranger to those who know this issue. She's a member of our Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS. She's worked on the front lines of the AIDS epidemic for more than a decade. She's been an advocate and a catalyst at the state, local and national levels. She transformed AID Atlanta, the oldest and largest AIDS service organization in the south into one of the most successful projects of its kind anywhere in the country. As Executive Director from 1988 to 1993, she tripled its size, beefed up its budget, and made it a direct service agency with a staff of 90 workers and 1,000 volunteers.

Her experience in running a large community-based organization makes her especially well equipped to build the partnerships we need throughout our country, for beating the AIDS epidemic will take this kind of teamwork everywhere. I am pleased that she has agreed to serve as the Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. I've worked with her and I can attest, she tells it like it is, she speaks the truth unvarnished, she won't hold back in this office. (Laughter and applause.) She is passionate. She is committed. She is difficult to say no to. (Laughter.) And I have already assured her that she will have the support and the resources she will need, including my personal support, to succeed in this all-important task. My door is open to her.

And now I'd like for us to all hear what she has to say. Sandy Thurman. (Applause.)

MS. THURMAN: Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President. Your being here together is a wonderful demonstration of your support for me and the administration's commitment to ending the AIDS crisis. I'm delighted to be joined today by my wonderful colleagues from the Presidential Advisory COuncil on HIV and AIDS and so many very special friends with whom I've worked the last 13 years in trying to end this epidemic.

Mr. President, I certainly share your commitment to a cure and note that extraordinary recent advances in medical treatments have given us a reason for real new hope to ending this plague.

But as we all know, this is a crisis of monumental proportion, and it will take -- it must be addressed, and will take all of our vigor and energy that we can muster to make progress. The epidemic is not over, and we must not and will not rest until HIV is eradicated.

Today, I would like to ask all of those living with HIV and with AIDS, the community of care-givers and care-providers, AIDS activists like you all, local and national AIDS organizations, and all of the federal agencies to join with the President, the Vice President, and with me in an even stronger partnership. Only by working together will we have a chance to successfully meet the challenges that this very complicated epidemic presents to us.

The President has given me his personal commitment to leadership in the fight against AIDS. And in turn, I offer the community my commitment to the efforts to develop vaccines, to find a cure, to stop the transmission of HIV, and to provide appropriate services and care to people who are already infected.

We will work to improve the level of services and housing for those most in need in our society while assessing the implications of changes in social programs like welfare and Medicaid.

We will strive to support culturally appropriate services and prevention messages to communities of color, to women, and to young gay men, where this epidemic is moving the fastest.

We will work to counteract the devastating effects that homophobia and that racism continue to have on this epidemic. (Applause.) And as you all know, this is not work that is done in a vacuum by me or by those in Washington here; it is work done by the thousands of people that are dedicated and selfless in communities across the country who struggle day by day to make a difference in this epidemic.

Our job here is to make certain that they have the tools to do their good work. I am heartened that, in that same spirit, the President has made a substantial effort to strengthen the Office of National AIDS Policy. We will be working to build an enhanced staff with a broad range of skills, and we will enlist those who best understand medical and treatment issues, prevention and education, social programs, discrimination, and housing to share their expertise. And I might add, that would be all of you. (Laughter.)

We have the highest level of access to the administration; I think that's evidenced here today. This is another reflection of the President's and the Vice President's commitment to our nation's war on HIV and AIDS.

This is not an epidemic of a few; this is an epidemic of us all. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have already lost their lives to AIDS. It has stolen some of our brightest and most talented friends and loved ones in the prime of their lives. And beyond our borders, millions of people struggle against the odds to live long enough to reap the benefits of a cure.

We are deeply aware of responsibility that this administration has to all Americans who are living with HIV and AIDS and to those all around the world who turn to us for leadership and for hope. That is an awesome responsibility, one which will demand that each of us work together in partnership to end this epidemic. I look forward to that partnership and appreciate this opportunity to offer whatever help I can to the President, to the nation, and to all of you who are working so valiantly on the front lines of this epidemic. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Q Mr. President, how do you see this czar being different from your two previous czars? What would you like to see changes? And have you given up on the so-called "Manhattan-style" project that you promised in '92?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, I think if you look at -- let me answer the second question first. If I had told you in 1993 in January, when I was inaugurated, that we would have eight new AIDS drugs for AIDS-related conditions, that the number of AIDS related deaths would be going down, and that the quality and length of life expectancy would expand as much as it

had -- you would think that we had put a pretty good amount of effort in here with a 60 percent increase in our investment.

So I think we're moving forward. What I would like to see is to rely on the President's Advisory Council and the AIDS office even more heavily to mobilize even more people to have support for the work we're doing and research to find a cure and also to do more at the grassroots level and to tie the efforts at the community level to what we're trying to do nationally. And I think that Sandy will do a very good job of that because of her personal experience in Atlanta.

Q Mr. President, when you read --

Q Mr. President, do you think you've made any progress, sir, in your meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu? Do you think that you've been able to move the peace process closer to being back on track as you put it earlier?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we had quite a long meeting, as you know. What are we, an hour late staring here? (Laughter.) And I apologize to you for that, but it was necessary that we continue the meeting. It was a long and very thorough meeting. Now it's important for us to visit with the Palestinians, and we'll try to get this thing up and going again.

But you know how these things are -- it's -- I need to say not too much about it and work very hard on it. And that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to do my best to get it back on track.

Q But Mr. President, Mr. President, did anything -- part of the Palestinian frustration is that the Prime Minister says he wants to speed up final status talks. His position -- according to them -- appears to be final. I was wondering if you saw any change in that position?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm -- again, I think the problem is the more I comment, the more I undermine the chances of success. We had a very specific, frank, candid, and long talk. And now we're going to talk to the Palestinians and see whether there is something we can do to get this going again. And we'll do our very best, and I'll do my best. That's all I think I should say right now.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

END 2:40 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT NAMES SANDRA L. THURMAN
AS DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

The President today announced his intention to appoint Sandra L. Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy.

For more than a decade, Ms. Thurman has been a leader and advocate for people with AIDS at the local, state, and federal levels.

From 1988 to 1993, Sandra L. Thurman, of Atlanta, Georgia, served as the Executive Director of AID Atlanta, a community based organization which provides health and support services to people with HIV/AIDS and offers an array of HIV prevention programs. Under her leadership, AID Atlanta, the largest and oldest AIDS service organization in the south, tripled in size and became a multi-million dollar, direct-service agency with 90 staff members and over 1000 volunteers.

From 1993 to 1996, Ms. Thurman was the Director of Advocacy Programs at The Task Force for Child Survival and Development at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. As Director, she focused on the global health concerns of children, including immunization and the eradication of polio. She is currently Director of Citizen Exchanges at the United States Information Agency.

Ms. Thurman is a Member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and of the Georgia State AIDS Task Force, the Fulton County HIV Planning Council and the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR). She has served on the Board of Directors of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition, AID Atlanta, Sisterlove, Inc., and the Atlanta AIDS Interfaith Network, among others. She is a recognized expert on AIDS issues and has provided testimony before the United States Senate, the White House Conference on HIV/AIDS and the National Commission on AIDS. Ms. Thurman earned a Bachelor's degree from Mercer University.

The Office of National AIDS Policy is responsible for coordinating federal policy and programs on HIV/AIDS, and with building partnerships between Federal agencies, the AIDS community, AIDS service providers, state and local officials, and major business leaders. The objective of the Office of National AIDS Policy is to increase the rate of progress in treatment and education, and to maintain the focus on science and scientific research.

THE KING CENTER

RETTA SCOTT KING
under

EXTER SCOTT KING
airman, President and
f Executive Officer

RISTINE KING FARRIS
Chair, Treasurer

RVIN GOLDSTEIN
Chair

RNICE A. KING
retary

Ms. Sandy Thurman
c/o Sheridan Group
1808 Swann St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20009

Fax: (202) 483-1964

Dear Ms. Thurman

On behalf of the King family, Dexter Scott King and the King Center family, I write to add my congratulations to the many you are receiving on being appointed as U.S. AIDS Czar.

President Clinton has chosen wisely in selecting you for this important post, for you have demonstrated exceptional vision. dedication and leadership in the struggle against AIDS.

I look forward to your stewardship of the national effort to prevent the spread of AIDS, to secure quality medical care for its many victims and to find the research needed to eradicate this scourge from our nation and world. In this endeavor, you have my support, and I wish you the greatest success in your mission.

In closing, let me just say how gratifying it is that one who has worked so hard in this important cause will be providing leadership in developing national AIDS policy in the years ahead. With faith in your commitment and prayers for your success, I look forward to hearing of your accomplishments in the future.

Sincerely,

Coretta Scott King

Coretta Scott King

AID Atlanta
1438 West Peachtree St., NW
Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30309-2955
Office: 404-872-0600
Fax: 404-885-6799

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 7, 1997
From: AID Atlanta 1438 West Peachtree St NW Ste 100 Atlanta 30309
Contact: Mark King, Director of Education and Communications
(404) 872-0600 ext. 215
kingm@aidatlanta.org

Former AID Atlanta Director Named Clinton's "AIDS Czar"

(Atlanta - April 7) At a White House ceremony this afternoon, President Clinton will name former AID Atlanta executive director Sandra Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. The position, commonly known as "AIDS Czar," is in charge of developing a national response to the disease, which has killed well over half a million Americans.

Thurman has a clear picture of her immediate priorities. "We first must reinvigorate the AIDS Policy Office," she said. "And there are two aspects to this. First, we must establish an effective relationship with the AIDS community. I'd like to form a 'kitchen cabinet' of people who have worked in AIDS for the past decade. In this respect I envision the office as a battle station for the community to bring their concerns and help influence public policy. The second aspect is to establish a stronger front at the White House. The President has listened to my concerns about this, and has moved the Directors' office into the White House complex, which should allow the director to keep HIV issues on the forefront of the national conscience, reminding the administration of the importance of AIDS issues."

Thurman has worked in direct services for people with AIDS for a number of years, and this perspective is a strong component of her attitude toward the disease. "I have an understanding of what it takes to work in the front lines in the battle against AIDS," she said. "For 13 years I've worked as a volunteer helping people with AIDS on an individual basis, and as an administrator. This privilege has allowed me to hear and understand the needs of the community, because I've been there. This is not simply policy for me" she adds. "This is personal."

Thurman joined the staff of AID Atlanta, which has provided service and support for people with AIDS since 1982, as Director of Public Affairs in 1988. In 1989 she became the agency's executive director, and served until 1993, when she left for the Carter Center to become Director of Advocacy Programs for the Task Force for Child Survival and Development. She currently serves as a White House appointee to the United States Information Agency, in the role of Director of Citizen Exchange.

# # #

from the office of

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

of Massachusetts

STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON THE APPOINTMENT OF SANDY THURMAN TO BE THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

For Immediate Release
April 7, 1997

Contact: Jim Manley
(202)224-2633

Sandy's appointment as the new White House AIDS Czar is just what the doctor ordered. Sandy is a talented, committed, and courageous leader who has been on the front lines of the battle against AIDS since the beginning.

Sandy does not shy away from difficult challenges -- she thrives on them. From community based AIDS organizations to corporate board rooms to Congress, she knows how to bring people together and get the job done I'm delighted she has agreed to this all-important effort. She's an ideal general for our modern war on AIDS.

SF AIDS FOUNDATION

NEWS RELEASE

1-page FAX To: Assignment Editors (Health/AIDS)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeff De Lucio-Brock (415) 487-3072
Pager (415) 280-0223

AIDS CZAR APPOINTMENT

MEANINGFUL RESPONSIBILITY AND CLOSE ACCESS TO PRESIDENT NECESSARY TO TACKLE DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE EPIDEMIC

S.F. AIDS FOUNDATION APPLAUDS TODAY'S APPOINTMENT OF SANDRA THURMAN

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, APRIL 7, 1997 -- The San Francisco AIDS Foundation applauds the appointment today of Sandra Thurman as the country's new AIDS czar and calls on President Clinton to grant her the access and authority she will need to tackle the dramatic new changes in the epidemic.

"President Clinton must grant the new AIDS czar access, responsibility and delegation of meaningful authority," says San Francisco AIDS Foundation Executive Director Pat Christen, who was on a short list of finalists for the position. "Only with such authority can Sandra Thurman effectively face the dramatic changes taking place in managing and ending the HIV epidemic -- particularly the advent of the genuinely hopeful protease inhibitor drugs that will revolutionize the way AIDS services and HIV prevention programs are delivered."

Thurman and Christen have collaborated on the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief, a coalition of the nation's largest metropolitan areas funded under Title I of the Ryan White CARE Act. Thurman, a member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, served as executive director of AID Atlanta, the southeast's first and largest AIDS service organization.

"Sandy is an intelligent, articulate and compassionate AIDS advocate," Christen said. "Her understanding of the complexity of AIDS issues makes her an invaluable resource in the development of national AIDS policy."

* * *

The San Francisco AIDS Foundation -- a non-profit, community-based AIDS service organization at the forefront of the battle against HIV disease since 1982 -- provides direct services to thousands of clients, mounts HIV prevention campaigns, coordinates more than 400 volunteers, operates a trilingual AIDS crisis and referral hotline, advocates for humane HIV-related public policies, and distributes AIDS treatment information worldwide.

# # #

NAPWA's Statement on the Appointment of Sandra Thurman

NAPWA

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS

April 7, 1997

The National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) commends the President on his strong appointment of a longstanding member of the AIDS community to the White House Office of National AIDS Policy.

We at NAPWA are committed to working with Ms. Thurman and this Administration to end the AIDS epidemic. We encourage the President to ensure that Ms. Thurman and the office have the resources required and his personal support necessary for success.

1413 K Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20005
Phone: (202) 898-0414
FAX: (202) 898-0435

CAEAR
CITIES ADVOCATING EMERGENCY AIDS RELIEF

Contact: H. Alexander Robinson,
Administrator of Federal Affairs
202.789.3565

CAEAR Applauds the President on the Appointment of Sandra Thurman to White House Post

April 7, 1997

The Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition applauds the President on his appointment of Sandra Thurman to Director of the White House Office on AIDS Policy.

Sandra Thurman, a national AIDS community leader, and former Vice Chair of the CAEAR Coalition, has what takes to lead America on HIV issues. Her background as an AIDS activist, administrator, and policy leader give her necessary credentials to lead America to better treatments, care and ultimately a cure for HIV disease.

The CAEAR Coalition has witnessed first hand her tenacity, strength of character and excellent grasp of complex policy issues, in her ongoing efforts to assure that people living with HIV get the treatments, medical care, and social supports that they require as basic life needs.

We strongly support her appointment and look forward to continuing our close working relationship with Ms. Thurman and others at the White House as together we struggle to adapt to the ever changing spectrum of HIV disease and fight for a cure to AIDS worldwide.

The CAEAR Coalition
1413 K Street N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
202 789 3565
202 789 4277 fax

Executive Committee
Ernest Hopkins, *Chair*
Suzi Rodriguez, *Vice Chair*
Robert Rybicki, *Treasurer*
[illegible] Member, Southern

CITY OF ATLANTA NEWS RELEASE

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30335-0319
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: Nick Gold
(404) 330-6511 or pager
1-800-672-4861

April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT CLINTON NAMES SANDRA THURMAN AIDS CZAR
Mayor Campbell applauds her appointment

President Bill Clinton today appointed Atlanta native Sandra L. Thurman the nation's AIDS Policy Director. The announcement was made at a White House ceremony.

"Sandra Thurman has been a good friend and will be a tremendous asset to President Clinton and his administration in moving forward the nation's AIDS agenda," said Mayor Bill Campbell. "Sandra has a long history of commitment to Atlanta's AIDS community as well as the nation's. She is a goal oriented and results driven individual who I know will make significant progress in better informing our nation about the AIDS epidemic."

Ms. Thurman has a long history of involvement in serving the AIDS community. In 1988 she joined AID Atlanta, the southeast's first and largest AIDS service organization, as the Director of Public Affairs. In 1989 she was named its Executive Director. Under her leadership, AID Atlanta tripled in size, becoming a multi-million dollar, direct-service agency with 90 staff members and over 1,000 volunteers.

On World AIDS Day in 1994, Mayor Campbell hosted the first Mayor's Conference on AIDS in the Workplace. More than 400 business and labor leaders participated in the conference, and "thanks to Sandra Thurman and the support of her constituents in the AIDS community the conference was a great success," added Mayor Campbell.

# # #

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

1101 14th Street NW
Washington, DC 20005
Contact: Kim I. Mills
phone 202 628 4160
pager 800 386 5997

News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, April 7, 1997

THURMAN A STRONG CHOICE TO LEAD OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY, HRC SAYS

Combines Leadership Skills, Commitment, Access

WASHINGTON – The Human Rights Campaign commended the selection today of Sandra L. Thurman as the new White House "AIDS czar."

"Sandra Thurman is a solid choice to take the Office of National AIDS Policy to the next level," said Elizabeth Birch, HRC's executive director. "She brings the right mix of leadership, political skills and commitment to the fight against HIV and AIDS."

Winnie Stachelberg, HRC's legislative director, said Thurman has the experience to design and execute the administration's programs in the changing struggle to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

"Thurman was intricately involved in the creation and enactment of the Ryan White CARE Act in 1990 and its reauthorization in 1996," said Stachelberg, who is a member of the executive committee of the umbrella group National Organizations Responding to AIDS. "She knows AIDS policy and politics from the inside–a critical combination of skills for this job."

Thurman becomes the third person to hold the position known informally as the national AIDS czar. She replaces Patsy Fleming, who stepped down after President Clinton's re-election.

Thurman, a native of Atlanta, is past executive director of AID Atlanta, the Southeast's first and largest AIDS service provider. Under her stewardship, AID Atlanta tripled in size, becoming a multimillion-dollar direct service agency with 90 staffers and more than 1,000 volunteers, serving thousands of individuals and families with HIV and AIDS.

Most recently, Thurman was a White House appointee to the U.S. Information Agency, responsible for cultural and professional exchange programs.

Thurman has a history of political and public service. In 1996, she held a variety of positions with the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton-Gore re-election campaign.

From 1993 to 1996, Thurman was director of advocacy programs at the Task Force for Child Survival and Development in Atlanta. The task force is sponsored by such respected organizations as UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Thurman's AIDS-related activities include serving on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS; the Georgia State AIDS Task Force; the Fulton County HIV Planning Council; and the executive committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief.

SANDRA L. THURMAN

Ms. Thurman currently directs the Advocacy Programs at The Task Force for Child Survival and Development at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The Task Force, which is sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), The World Bank, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and The Rockefeller Foundation, focuses on global health concerns of children. Specific areas of advocacy include immunization, acute respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, micronutrients (Vitamin A deficiency, iodine deficiency disorders, iron deficiency anemia), Guinea worm eradication, breastfeeding, safe motherhood initiatives, and the eradication of polio.

Prior to joining The Task Force for Child Survival and Development in August 1993, Ms. Thurman was Executive Director of AID Atlanta, the Southeast's largest and oldest community-based AIDS service organization.

Her involvement with AID Atlanta began in 1988 when she joined the agency as its Director of Public Affairs, bringing to the post an extensive background in public service, politics, marketing and communications. She was named AID Atlanta's Executive Director in 1989. During her tenure, the organization tripled in size to become a multi-million dollar agency with 90 staff and more than 1,000 active volunteers.

A native of Atlanta with a family history of political and public service which includes serving as Political Director for the Clinton Campaign in Georgia, Ms. Thurman's AIDS-related activities include membership on the Georgia State AIDS Task Force, the Fulton County HIV Planning Council and the Executive Committee of the coalition of cities funded under Title I of the Ryan White Care Act (CAEAR Coalition). Additionally, she serves on the Board of Directors of AID Atlanta, Sisterlove, Inc. and the Atlanta AIDS Interfaith Network. In June 1992, she was selected by the U.S. Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee to testify with Ms. Elizabeth Taylor on federal AIDS programs and priorities during the Committee's oversight hearings on the success of the Ryan White CARE Act. The National Commission on AIDS requested Ms. Thurman to present testimony in November 1992 on care, financing and social support for persons with AIDS. She was recently appointed by President Clinton to serve on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

Ms. Thurman currently serves on the Governor's Commission on Women, the Mayor's Council for Community Affairs, and the Advisory Commission for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. A graduate of Leadership Atlanta, she is a member of the International Women's Forum, and has served on the board of the National Kidney Foundation, the March of Dimes, Pets Are Loving Support, and the Atlanta Ballet Associates.

Prior to joining AID Atlanta, she held positions as the Public Affairs Director for AmeriPlan Health Services, Georgia's largest health maintenance organization (HMO), and as a job placement specialist working with ex-offenders at the Georgia Department of Labor, Correctional Services Division.

Ms. Thurman earned her bachelor's degree in human resources administration and management from Mercer University in Georgia.

She remains an active consultant on fundraising and development and on managing organizational change, growth and diversity for non-profit organizations and public charities.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1997

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT DURING ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW AIDS DIRECTOR

The Roosevelt Room

2:25 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you, Mr. Vice President. I'd like to join the Vice President in thanking Eric Goosby for his work as the acting director of the office. And thank you very much, Patsy Fleming, for the fine job that you've done. We miss you. Thank you, Scott Hitt and all the members of the council, for the good work that you have been doing. And thank you, especially, for the meeting we had together not so very long ago, and the candor and passion of your recommendations.

America has not beaten AIDS yet, but we are getting closer and we remain committed to the fight, and to winning it. More than ever, we need a strong advocate for people with AIDS, and of course that's why we're here today. Let me begin by reiterating our goal: We want to find a vaccine against the AIDS virus and a cure for those who have HIV infection. They have eluded researchers so far, but we are committed -- the work goes on. And it will go on until we are successful.

Until that day comes when HIV and AIDS no longer threaten our people, we must continue to do all we can to hit the epidemic hard with a coordinated effort of research, treatment, and prevention.

When I took office, I established the Office of National AIDS Policy because America had been turning its head away from the problem. Many Americans had not come to grips with HIV and AIDS, and their consequences. Now we're learning. AIDS strikes in the best of families, and from this disease no community has immunity -- gay or straight, black or white, male or

female, old or young. Anyone can get AIDS. And if we're going to win this fight, we must begin with the acceptance of that fact.

It was clear four years ago, as it is now, that it is only with an aggressive campaign against AIDS that we will win the battle. That is what we have begun. In the first four years, we increased overall spending by about 60 percent. In FY 1997 alone, $167 million will go to state AIDS drug assistance programs which provide access to medication, including protease inhibitors for low-income individuals with HIV who don't have prescription drug coverage.

We speeded the time needed to approve drugs to treat AIDS, leading to the approval of eight new AIDS drugs and 19 for AIDS-related conditions. This has allowed many people simply to go on with their lives, to live with this disease not worry free, but not in despair either.

We should all take heart that for the first time there has been a marked decrease in deaths among people with AIDS. With new treatment therapies, we hope to see even greater life expectancy. And with education and prevention, the number of estimated new HIV infections has slowed dramatically.

In our war against AIDS, the Office of National AIDS Policy plays an important role. The office is charged with coordinating all our federal policy and programs regarding AIDS. It also builds our partnerships with other levels of government and with private-sector communities, and organizations. Our office is charged with keeping us on track in treatment and in education and to keep our focus on research for ways to prevent and cure this disease. An AIDS vaccine could save millions of lives around the world. And we must help those who are already infected. Make no mistake, a cure has been and always will be our very first priority.

The Director of this office must be an individual with a clear understanding of AIDS as a disease and as a social issue in America, someone who knows the scientific front as well as the human center of AIDS, someone who knows how to fight to cut through red tape to get the job done.

I have found that person in the woman I nominate today to fill this office, Sandy Thurman. She is no stranger to those who know this issue. She's a member of our Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS. She's worked on the front lines of the AIDS epidemic for more than a decade. She's been an advocate and a catalyst at the state, local and national levels. She transformed AID Atlanta, the oldest and largest AIDS service organization in the south into one of the most successful projects of its kind anywhere in the country. As Executive Director from 1988 to 1993, she tripled its size, beefed up its budget, and made it a direct service agency with a staff of 90 workers and 1,000 volunteers.

Her experience in running a large community-based organization makes her especially well equipped to build the partnerships we need throughout our country, for beating the AIDS epidemic will take this kind of teamwork everywhere. I am pleased that she has agreed to serve as the Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. I've worked with her and I can attest, she tells it like it is, she speaks the truth unvarnished, she won't hold back in this office. (Laughter and applause.) She is passionate. She is committed. She is difficult to say no to. (Laughter.) And I have already assured her that she will have the support and the resources she will need, including my personal support, to succeed in this all-important task. My door is open to her.

And now I'd like for us to all hear what she has to say. Sandy Thurman. (Applause.)

MS. THURMAN: Thank you, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President. Your being here together is a wonderful demonstration of your support for me and the administration's commitment to ending the AIDS crisis. I'm delighted to be joined today by my wonderful colleagues from the Presidential Advisory COuncil on HIV and AIDS and so many very special friends with whom I've worked the last 13 years in trying to end this epidemic.

Mr. President, I certainly share your commitment to a cure and note that extraordinary recent advances in medical treatments have given us a reason for real new hope to ending this plague.

But as we all know, this is a crisis of monumental proportion, and it will take -- it must be addressed, and will take all of our vigor and energy that we can muster to make progress. The epidemic is not over, and we must not and will not rest until HIV is eradicated.

Today, I would like to ask all of those living with HIV and with AIDS, the community of care-givers and care-providers, AIDS activists like you all, local and national AIDS organizations, and all of the federal agencies to join with the President, the Vice President, and with me in an even stronger partnership. Only by working together will we have a chance to successfully meet the challenges that this very complicated epidemic presents to us.

The President has given me his personal commitment to leadership in the fight against AIDS. And in turn, I offer the community my commitment to the efforts to develop vaccines, to find a cure, to stop the transmission of HIV, and to provide appropriate services and care to people who are already infected.

We will work to improve the level of services and housing for those most in need in our society while assessing the implications of changes in social programs like welfare and Medicaid.

We will strive to support culturally appropriate services and prevention messages to communities of color, to women, and to young gay men, where this epidemic is moving the fastest.

We will work to counteract the devastating effects that homophobia and that racism continue to have on this epidemic. (Applause.) And as you all know, this is not work that is done in a vacuum by me or by those in Washington here; it is work done by the thousands of people that are dedicated and selfless in communities across the country who struggle day by day to make a difference in this epidemic.

Our job here is to make certain that they have the tools to do their good work. I am heartened that, in that same spirit, the President has made a substantial effort to strengthen the Office of National AIDS Policy. We will be working to build an enhanced staff with a broad range of skills, and we will enlist those who best understand medical and treatment issues, prevention and education, social programs, discrimination, and housing to share their expertise. And I might add, that would be all of you. (Laughter.)

We have the highest level of access to the administration; I think that's evidenced here today. This is another reflection of the President's and the Vice President's commitment to our nation's war on HIV and AIDS.

This is not an epidemic of a few; this is an epidemic of us all. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have already lost their lives to AIDS. It has stolen some of our brightest and most talented friends and loved ones in the prime of their lives. And beyond our borders, millions of people struggle against the odds to live long enough to reap the benefits of a cure.

We are deeply aware of responsibility that this administration has to all Americans who are living with HIV and AIDS and to those all around the world who turn to us for leadership and for hope. That is an awesome responsibility, one which will demand that each of us work together in partnership to end this epidemic. I look forward to that partnership and appreciate this opportunity to offer whatever help I can to the President, to the nation, and to all of you who are working so valiantly on the front lines of this epidemic. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Q Mr. President, how do you see this czar being different from your two previous czars? What would you like to see changes? And have you given up on the so-called "Manhattan-style" project that you promised in '92?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, I think if you look at -- let me answer the second question first. If I had told you in 1993 in January, when I was inaugurated, that we would have eight new AIDS drugs for AIDS-related conditions, that the number of AIDS related deaths would be going down, and that the quality and length of life expectancy would expand as much as it

had -- you would think that we had put a pretty good amount of effort in here with a 60 percent increase in our investment.

So I think we're moving forward. What I would like to see is to rely on the President's Advisory Council and the AIDS office even more heavily to mobilize even more people to have support for the work we're doing and research to find a cure and also to do more at the grassroots level and to tie the efforts at the community level to what we're trying to do nationally. And I think that Sandy will do a very good job of that because of her personal experience in Atlanta.

Q Mr. President, when you read --

Q Mr. President, do you think you've made any progress, sir, in your meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu? Do you think that you've been able to move the peace process closer to being back on track as you put it earlier?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we had quite a long meeting, as you know. What are we, an hour late staring here? (Laughter.) And I apologize to you for that, but it was necessary that we continue the meeting. It was a long and very thorough meeting. Now it's important for us to visit with the Palestinians, and we'll try to get this thing up and going again.

But you know how these things are -- it's -- I need to say not too much about it and work very hard on it. And that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to do my best to get it back on track.

Q But Mr. President, Mr. President, did anything -- part of the Palestinian frustration is that the Prime Minister says he wants to speed up final status talks. His position -- according to them -- appears to be final. I was wondering if you saw any change in that position?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm -- again, I think the problem is the more I comment, the more I undermine the chances of success. We had a very specific, frank, candid, and long talk. And now we're going to talk to the Palestinians and see whether there is something we can do to get this going again. And we'll do our very best, and I'll do my best. That's all I think I should say right now.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

END 2:40 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT NAMES SANDRA L. THURMAN
AS DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

The President today announced his intention to appoint Sandra L. Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy.

For more than a decade, Ms. Thurman has been a leader and advocate for people with AIDS at the local, state, and federal levels.

From 1988 to 1993, Sandra L. Thurman, of Atlanta, Georgia, served as the Executive Director of AID Atlanta, a community based organization which provides health and support services to people with HIV/AIDS and offers an array of HIV prevention programs. Under her leadership, AID Atlanta, the largest and oldest AIDS service organization in the south, tripled in size and became a multi-million dollar, direct-service agency with 90 staff members and over 1000 volunteers.

From 1993 to 1996, Ms. Thurman was the Director of Advocacy Programs at The Task Force for Child Survival and Development at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. As Director, she focused on the global health concerns of children, including immunization and the eradication of polio. She is currently Director of Citizen Exchanges at the United States Information Agency.

Ms. Thurman is a Member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and of the Georgia State AIDS Task Force, the Fulton County HIV Planning Council and the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR). She has served on the Board of Directors of the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition, AID Atlanta, Sisterlove, Inc., and the Atlanta AIDS Interfaith Network, among others. She is a recognized expert on AIDS issues and has provided testimony before the United States Senate, the White House Conference on HIV/AIDS and the National Commission on AIDS. Ms. Thurman earned a Bachelor's degree from Mercer University.

The Office of National AIDS Policy is responsible for coordinating federal policy and programs on HIV/AIDS, and with building partnerships between Federal agencies, the AIDS community, AIDS service providers, state and local officials, and major business leaders. The objective of the Office of National AIDS Policy is to increase the rate of progress in treatment and education, and to maintain the focus on science and scientific research.

THE KING CENTER

CORETTA SCOTT KING
founder

DEXTER SCOTT KING
Chairman, President and
Chief Executive Officer

CHRISTINE KING FARRIS
Vice Chair, Treasurer

MARVIN GOLDSTEIN
Vice Chair

BERNICE A. KING
Secretary

Ms. Sandy Thurman
c/o Sheridan Group
1808 Swann St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20009

Fax: (202) 483-1964

Dear Ms. Thurman

On behalf of the King family, Dexter Scott King and the King Center family, I write to add my congratulations to the many you are receiving on being appointed as U.S. AIDS Czar.

President Clinton has chosen wisely in selecting you for this important post, for you have demonstrated exceptional vision, dedication and leadership in the struggle against AIDS.

I look forward to your stewardship of the national effort to prevent the spread of AIDS, to secure quality medical care for its many victims and to fund the research needed to eradicate this scourge from our nation and world. In this endeavor, you have my support, and I wish you the greatest success in your mission.

In closing, let me just say how gratifying it is that one who has worked so hard in this important cause will be providing leadership in developing national AIDS policy in the years ahead. With faith in your commitment and prayers for your success, I look forward to hearing of your accomplishments in the future.

Sincerely,

Coretta Scott King

Coretta Scott King

AID Atlanta
1438 West Peachtree St., NW
Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30309-2955
Office: 404-872-0600
Fax: 404-885-6799

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 7, 1997
From: AID Atlanta 1438 West Peachtree St NW Ste 100 Atlanta 30309
Contact: Mark King, Director of Education and Communications
(404) 872-0600 ext. 215
kingm@aidatlanta.org

Former AID Atlanta Director Named Clinton's "AIDS Czar"

(Atlanta - April 7) At a White House ceremony this afternoon, President Clinton will name former AID Atlanta executive director Sandra Thurman as Director of the Office of National AIDS Policy. The position, commonly known as "AIDS Czar," is in charge of developing a national response to the disease, which has killed well over half a million Americans.

Thurman has a clear picture of her immediate priorities. "We first must reinvigorate the AIDS Policy Office," she said. "And there are two aspects to this. First, we must establish an effective relationship with the AIDS community. I'd like to form a 'kitchen cabinet' of people who have worked in AIDS for the past decade. In this respect I envision the office as a battle station for the community to bring their concerns and help influence public policy. The second aspect is to establish a stronger front at the White House. The President has listened to my concerns about this, and has moved the Directors' office into the White House complex, which should allow the director to keep HIV issues on the forefront of the national conscience, reminding the administration of the importance of AIDS issues."

Thurman has worked in direct services for people with AIDS for a number of years, and this perspective is a strong component of her attitude toward the disease. "I have an understanding of what it takes to work in the front lines in the battle against AIDS," she said. "For 13 years I've worked as a volunteer helping people with AIDS on an individual basis, and as an administrator. This privilege has allowed me to hear and understand the needs of the community, because I've been there. This is not simply policy for me" she adds. "This is personal."

Thurman joined the staff of AID Atlanta, which has provided service and support for people with AIDS since 1982, as Director of Public Affairs in 1988. In 1989 she became the agency's executive director, and served until 1993, when she left for the Carter Center to become Director of Advocacy Programs for the Task Force for Child Survival and Development. She currently serves as a White House appointee to the United States Information Agency, in the role of Director of Citizen Exchange.

# # #

from the office of

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

of Massachusetts

STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON THE APPOINTMENT OF SANDY THURMAN TO BE THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY

For Immediate Release
April 7, 1997

Contact: Jim Manley
(202)224-2633

Sandy's appointment as the new White House AIDS Czar is just what the doctor ordered. Sandy is a talented, committed, and courageous leader who has been on the front lines of the battle against AIDS since the beginning.

Sandy does not shy away from difficult challenges -- she thrives on them. From community based AIDS organizations to corporate board rooms to Congress, she knows how to bring people together and get the job done. I'm delighted she has agreed to this all-important effort. She's an ideal general for our modern war on AIDS.

SF AIDS FOUNDATION

NEWS RELEASE

1-page FAX To: Assignment Editors (Health/AIDS)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeff De Lucio-Brock (415) 487-3072
Pager (415) 280-0223

AIDS CZAR APPOINTMENT

MEANINGFUL RESPONSIBILITY AND CLOSE ACCESS TO PRESIDENT NECESSARY TO TACKLE DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE EPIDEMIC

S.F. AIDS FOUNDATION APPLAUDS TODAY'S APPOINTMENT OF SANDRA THURMAN

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, APRIL 7, 1997 -- The San Francisco AIDS Foundation applauds the appointment today of Sandra Thurman as the country's new AIDS czar and calls on President Clinton to grant her the access and authority she will need to tackle the dramatic new changes in the epidemic.

"President Clinton must grant the new AIDS czar access, responsibility and delegation of meaningful authority," says San Francisco AIDS Foundation Executive Director Pat Christen, who was on a short list of finalists for the position. "Only with such authority can Sandra Thurman effectively face the dramatic changes taking place in managing and ending the HIV epidemic -- particularly the advent of the genuinely hopeful protease inhibitor drugs that will revolutionize the way AIDS services and HIV prevention programs are delivered."

Thurman and Christen have collaborated on the Executive Committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief, a coalition of the nation's largest metropolitan areas funded under Title I of the Ryan White CARE Act. Thurman, a member of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, served as executive director of AID Atlanta, the southeast's first and largest AIDS service organization.

"Sandy is an intelligent, articulate and compassionate AIDS advocate," Christen said. "Her understanding of the complexity of AIDS issues makes her an invaluable resource in the development of national AIDS policy."

* * *

The San Francisco AIDS Foundation -- a non-profit, community-based AIDS service organization at the forefront of the battle against HIV disease since 1982 -- provides direct services to thousands of clients, mounts HIV prevention campaigns, coordinates more than 400 volunteers, operates a trilingual AIDS crisis and referral hotline, advocates for humane HIV-related public policies, and distributes AIDS treatment information worldwide.

# # #

NAPWA's Statement on the Appointment of Sandra Thurman

NAPWA

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS

April 7, 1997

The National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) commends the President on his strong appointment of a longstanding member of the AIDS community to the White House Office of National AIDS Policy.

We at NAPWA are committed to working with Ms. Thurman and this Administration to end the AIDS epidemic. We encourage the President to ensure that Ms. Thurman and the office have the resources required and his personal support necessary for success.

1413 K Street, N.W.,
Washington D.C. 20005
Phone: (202) 898-0414
FAX: (202) 898-0435

CAEAR
CITIES ADVOCATING EMERGENCY AIDS RELIEF

Contact: H. Alexander Robinson,
Administrator of Federal Affairs
202.789.3565

CAEAR Applauds the President on the Appointment of Sandra Thurman to White House Post

April 7, 1997

The Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition applauds the President on his appointment of Sandra Thurman to Director of the White House Office on AIDS Policy.

Sandra Thurman, a national AIDS community leader, and former Vice Chair of the CAEAR Coalition, has what takes to lead America on HIV issues. Her background as an AIDS activist, administrator, and policy leader give her necessary credentials to lead America to better treatments, care and ultimately a cure for HIV disease.

The CAEAR Coalition has witnessed first hand her tenacity, strength of character and excellent grasp of complex policy issues, in her ongoing efforts to assure that people living with HIV get the treatments, medical care, and social supports that they require as basic life needs.

We strongly support her appointment and look forward to continuing our close working relationship with Ms. Thurman and others at the White House as together we struggle to adapt to the ever changing spectrum of HIV disease and fight for a cure to AIDS worldwide.

The CAEAR Coalition
1413 K Street N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
202 789 3565
202 789 4277 fax

Executive Committee
Ernest Hopkins, *Chair*
Suzi Rodriguez, *Vice Chair*
Robert Rybicki, *Treasurer*
[illegible]

CITY OF ATLANTA NEWS RELEASE

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30335-0319
CONTACT: Nick Gold
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1-800-672-4861

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 1997

PRESIDENT CLINTON NAMES SANDRA THURMAN AIDS CZAR
Mayor Campbell applauds her appointment

President Bill Clinton today appointed Atlanta native Sandra L. Thurman the nation's AIDS Policy Director. The announcement was made at a White House ceremony.

"Sandra Thurman has been a good friend and will be a tremendous asset to President Clinton and his administration in moving forward the nation's AIDS agenda," said Mayor Bill Campbell. "Sandra has a long history of commitment to Atlanta's AIDS community as well as the nation's. She is a goal oriented and results driven individual who I know will make significant progress in better informing our nation about the AIDS epidemic."

Ms. Thurman has a long history of involvement in serving the AIDS community. In 1988 she joined AID Atlanta, the southeast's first and largest AIDS service organization, as the Director of Public Affairs. In 1989 she was named its Executive Director. Under her leadership, AID Atlanta tripled in size, becoming a multi-million dollar, direct-service agency with 90 staff members and over 1,000 volunteers.

On World AIDS Day in 1994, Mayor Campbell hosted the first Mayor's Conference on AIDS in the Workplace. More than 400 business and labor leaders participated in the conference, and "thanks to Sandra Thurman and the support of her constituents in the AIDS community the conference was a great success," added Mayor Campbell.

# # #

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

1101 14th Street NW
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News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, April 7, 1997

THURMAN A STRONG CHOICE TO LEAD OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY, HRC SAYS

Combines Leadership Skills, Commitment, Access

WASHINGTON -- The Human Rights Campaign commended the selection today of Sandra L. Thurman as the new White House "AIDS czar."

"Sandra Thurman is a solid choice to take the Office of National AIDS Policy to the next level," said Elizabeth Birch, HRC's executive director. "She brings the right mix of leadership, political skills and commitment to the fight against HIV and AIDS."

Winnie Stachelberg, HRC's legislative director, said Thurman has the experience to design and execute the administration's programs in the changing struggle to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

"Thurman was intricately involved in the creation and enactment of the Ryan White CARE Act in 1990 and its reauthorization in 1996," said Stachelberg, who is a member of the executive committee of the umbrella group National Organizations Responding to AIDS. "She knows AIDS policy and politics from the inside--a critical combination of skills for this job."

Thurman becomes the third person to hold the position known informally as the national AIDS czar. She replaces Patsy Fleming, who stepped down after President Clinton's re-election.

Thurman, a native of Atlanta, is past executive director of AID Atlanta, the Southeast's first and largest AIDS service provider. Under her stewardship, AID Atlanta tripled in size, becoming a multimillion-dollar direct service agency with 90 staffers and more than 1,000 volunteers, serving thousands of individuals and families with HIV and AIDS.

Most recently, Thurman was a White House appointee to the U.S. Information Agency, responsible for cultural and professional exchange programs.

Thurman has a history of political and public service. In 1996, she held a variety of positions with the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton-Gore re-election campaign.

From 1993 to 1996, Thurman was director of advocacy programs at the Task Force for Child Survival and Development in Atlanta. The task force is sponsored by such respected organizations as UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Thurman's AIDS-related activities include serving on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS; the Georgia State AIDS Task Force; the Fulton County HIV Planning Council; and the executive committee of Cities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief.

SANDRA L. THURMAN

Ms. Thurman currently directs the Advocacy Programs at The Task Force for Child Survival and Development at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The Task Force, which is sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), The World Bank, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and The Rockefeller Foundation, focuses on global health concerns of children. Specific areas of advocacy include immunization, acute respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, micronutrients (Vitamin A deficiency, iodine deficiency disorders, iron deficiency anemia), Guinea worm eradication, breastfeeding, safe motherhood initiatives, and the eradication of polio.

Prior to joining The Task Force for Child Survival and Development in August 1993, Ms. Thurman was Executive Director of AID Atlanta, the Southeast's largest and oldest community-based AIDS service organization.

Her involvement with AID Atlanta began in 1988 when she joined the agency as its Director of Public Affairs, bringing to the post an extensive background in public service, politics, marketing and communications. She was named AID Atlanta's Executive Director in 1989. During her tenure, the organization tripled in size to become a multi-million dollar agency with 90 staff and more than 1,000 active volunteers.

A native of Atlanta with a family history of political and public service which includes serving as Political Director for the Clinton Campaign in Georgia, Ms. Thurman's AIDS-related activities include membership on the Georgia State AIDS Task Force, the Fulton County HIV Planning Council and the Executive Committee of the coalition of cities funded under Title I of the Ryan White Care Act (CAEAR Coalition). Additionally, she serves on the Board of Directors of AID Atlanta, Sisterlove, Inc. and the Atlanta AIDS Interfaith Network. In June 1992, she was selected by the U.S. Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee to testify with Ms. Elizabeth Taylor on federal AIDS programs and priorities during the Committee's oversight hearings on the success of the Ryan White CARE Act. The National Commission on AIDS requested Ms. Thurman to present testimony in November 1992 on care, financing and social support for persons with AIDS. She was recently appointed by President Clinton to serve on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

Ms. Thurman currently serves on the Governor's Commission on Women, the Mayor's Council for Community Affairs, and the Advisory Commission for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. A graduate of Leadership Atlanta, she is a member of the International Women's Forum, and has served on the board of the National Kidney Foundation, the March of Dimes, Pets Are Loving Support, and the Atlanta Ballet Associates.

Prior to joining AID Atlanta, she held positions as the Public Affairs Director for AmeriPlan Health Services, Georgia's largest health maintenance organization (HMO), and as a job placement specialist working with ex-offenders at the Georgia Department of Labor, Correctional Services Division.

Ms. Thurman earned her bachelor's degree in human resources administration and management from Mercer University in Georgia.

She remains an active consultant on fundraising and development and on managing organizational change, growth and diversity for non-profit organizations and public charities.

Q & A

Sandra Thurman
April 7, 1997

Q: Aren't the new treatments in effect a cure?

A: The new treatments offer us hope, but that hope is tempered with realism.

These are new drugs. We know very little about their long-term efficacy or about unintended complications. They also frequently have serious side effects, so serious that some people must stop taking them. There are also a great number of people with AIDS who have do not yet have access to these drugs, either because they lack appropriate health care or because they cannot afford them.

Q: Given the effectiveness of the new treatments and their high cost, shouldn't some of the money currently being spent on services be transferred to drug reimbursement programs?

A: If we have learned nothing else from this epidemic, we have gathered a better understanding of how important a comprehensive effort is imperative to fight the epidemic. This Administration has already worked hard to increase the funding available to assist in paying for these new treatments. Yet we are also extremely aware that many people are not yet in a position to access them, and that others will need substantial support from service providers to comply with demanding treatment protocols. Pulling from one important need to pay for another important need is not a good solution.

Q: How will your work be different from your predecessors?

A: I have the highest regard for the work of the previous Directors. I am here to offer the best I have to fight this epidemic. I am here because I want to make a difference, and because my experience in AIDS service delivery and relationship to this Administration will afford me an opportunity to do so.

Q: Do you support needle exchange? Separate them.
Do you support mandatory AIDS education for children?

A: Part of the work of my office will be to advise the President and other members of his ~~team~~ Administration on the potential benefits and drawbacks of a variety of strategies to eliminate this disease. What is clear is that we have not done enough, and that we must explore every opportunity to stop the spread of HIV. There are a growing number of rigorous studies on the efficacy of needle exchange, AIDS education, and other prevention strategies. We will look hard at those studies, ~~and urge the President to let good science and research~~ rather than politics ~~dictate the course.~~ There has often been unfortunate collisions between science and politics in the fight against AIDS, and I am an advocate for taking

politics out of public health activities. I am certain that the President will support this, and will work hard to get Congress to do the same.

Q: ONAP has been beleaguered since its inception. The idea of an "AIDS czar" has proven to be mythical. You are being asked to do all of the coordination without having any authority. What has changed?

A: The President has made a commitment to making me and my staff a more integral part of his leadership team, including the work of the Department of Health and Human Services. I also hope to build more effective partnerships with community-based organizations, with which I have already built strong relationships.

Q: There has always been a lot of criticism that AIDS gets more attention than other fatal diseases. How can you justify the existence of an AIDS office when there isn't one for cancer or Alzheimers?

A: This is not "us" versus "them." The President has recognized the critical importance of leadership on coordination on an epidemic that has taken so many lives already and threatens millions more. ~~I applaud him for his commitment to me and this office, and his willingness to push even harder than~~ he has before.

Q: Given that this epidemic is growing most rapidly in communities of color, why is the ONAP Director a straight white women from the South? What is your experience in working in communities of color? With drug users?

A: This job is about marshalling federal resources, advising the President, and supporting the community. It is a job for which I am well qualified. I believe our only chance of success in beating this epidemic is by establishing strong and trusting relationships with those community organizations that are best equipped to understand and respond to the needs of those impacted by AIDS. My record, both here and in my home city of Atlanta, reveals a strong and unbending commitment to reaching out to people of color and to advocating with them for the resources they need. That commitment will continue.

Q: There are those who argue that there is too much of a focus on meeting the needs of gay white men, based largely on their level of political power. Do you think that's true? Why isn't there an equal emphasis on addressing the crisis for other groups?

A: The AIDS community has been organized and effective in its advocacy. That community has included a great number of men and women of color who speak clearly and effectively of their community's needs. This is not an "us" versus "them" -- this is a battle to end an epidemic. HIV doesn't discriminate, and neither should we.

COMMENTS BY SANDRA THURMAN

Monday, April 7, 1997

Thank you, Mr. President and Mr. Vice President, for your kind words. Your being here together is a strong demonstration of your support and the Administration's commitment to ending the AIDS crisis.

I am delighted today to be joined by my distinguished colleagues on the President's Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS, and so many friends with whom I have worked for the last 13 years to end this epidemic.

Mr. President, I certainly share your commitment to a cure, a goal to which we must all commit ourselves. The recent extraordinary advances in medical treatments have given us new reason to hope for an end to this plague. But as we all know, this remains a crisis of monumental proportion which must be addressed with all of the vigor and energy we can muster. This epidemic is not over. We cannot -- and will not -- rest until HIV is eradicated.

Today, I would like to ask all of those living with HIV and AIDS, the community of care providers, AIDS activists, local and national AIDS organizations, and all

federal agencies to join with me, the President and the Vice President in an even stronger partnership. Only by working together will we have any chance at successfully meeting the challenges that this epidemic presents.

The President has re-asserted to me his personal commitment to leadership in the fight against AIDS, and I in turn offer the community my commitment of the highest order to the efforts to develop a vaccine, to find a cure, to stop the transmission of HIV, and to provide appropriate care and service to those already infected.

You have my commitment to work closely with the members of the Domestic Policy Council, the Cabinet, and the Congress to keep HIV and AIDS high on the national agenda.

We will work to improve the level of services and housing provided to those in our society most in need, while assessing the implications of changes in social programs like welfare and Medicaid.

We will strive to support culturally appropriate services and prevention messages to communities of color, women, and young gay men, where this epidemic is

spreading at its fastest.

We will work to counteract the damaging impact that homophobia and racism continue to have on this epidemic.

But this is not work done in a vacuum by me or by those in Washington.
It is work done by thousands of dedicated, selfless people across this nation who struggle day by day to make a difference in this epidemic.
Our job here is to help make sure that you have the tools you need to do the job you know how to do.

I am heartened that, in that same spirit, the President has made a substantial effort to strengthen the Office of National AIDS Policy. We will be working to build an enhanced staff with a broad range of skills. And we will enlist those who understand medical and treatment issues, prevention and education, social programs, discrimination, and housing to share their expertise.

We will also have the highest level of access to the Adminstration. This is another reflection of the President's commitment to re-energize our Nation's war on AIDS.

This is not an epidemic of a few. This is an epidemic of us all. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have already lost their lives to AIDS. It has stolen some of our brightest and most talented friends and family members in the prime of their lives. And beyond our borders, millions of people struggle against the odds to live long enough to reap the benefits of a cure. We are deeply aware of the responsibility this Administration has to all Americans who are living with AIDS, and to those around the world who turn to us for leadership and hope.

That is an awesome responsibility, one which will demand that each of us work together in partnership to end this epidemic. I look forward to that partnership, and appreciate this opportunity to offer what help I can to the President, to the Nation, and to you all who are working so valiantly on the front lines of the epidemic.

COMMENTS BY SANDRA THURMAN

Monday, April 7, 1997

Thank you, Mr. President and Mr. Vice President, for your kind words. Your being here together is a strong demonstration of your support and the Administration's commitment to ending the AIDS crisis.

I am delighted today to be joined by my distinguished colleagues on the President's Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS, and so many friends with whom I have worked for the last 13 years to end this epidemic.

Mr. President, I certainly share your commitment to a cure, a goal to which we must all commit ourselves. The recent extraordinary advances in medical treatments have given us new reason to hope for an end to this plague. But as we all know, this remains a crisis of monumental proportion which must be addressed with all of the vigor and energy we can muster. This epidemic is not over. We cannot -- and will not -- rest until HIV is eradicated.

Today, I would like to ask all of those living with HIV and AIDS, the community of care providers, AIDS activists, local and national AIDS organizations, and all

federal agencies to join with me, the President and the Vice President in an even stronger partnership. Only by working together will we have any chance at successfully meeting the challenges that this epidemic presents.

The President has re-asserted to me his personal commitment to leadership in the fight against AIDS, and I in turn offer the community my commitment of the highest order to the efforts to develop a vaccine, to find a cure, to stop the transmission of HIV, and to provide appropriate care and service to those already infected.

You have my commitment to work closely with the members of the Domestic Policy Council, the Cabinet, and the Congress to keep HIV and AIDS high on the national agenda.

We will work to improve the level of services and housing provided to those in our society most in need, while assessing the implications of changes in social programs like welfare and Medicaid.

We will strive to support culturally appropriate services and prevention messages to communities of color, women, and young gay men, where this epidemic is

spreading at its fastest.

We will work to counteract the damaging impact that homophobia and racism continue to have on this epidemic.

But this is not work done in a vacuum by me or by those in Washington.
It is work done by thousands of dedicated, selfless people across this nation who struggle day by day to make a difference in this epidemic.
Our job here is to help make sure that you have the tools you need to do the job you know how to do.

I am heartened that, in that same spirit, the President has made a substantial effort to strengthen the Office of National AIDS Policy. We will be working to build an enhanced staff with a broad range of skills. And we will enlist those who understand medical and treatment issues, prevention and education, social programs, discrimination, and housing to share their expertise.

We will also have the highest level of access to the Adminstration. This is another reflection of the President's commitment to re-energize our Nation's war on AIDS.

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Delivering line: Deadocating for more money and better treatment with people with HIV and AIDS

Slow and steady take out
Ryan White funding alone

As some of : change approval to research and development

Take out next paragraph: Groups like yours

Take out: Evenb iun a calm nice neighborhood

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AIDS Action Council -

In the next week
to Peg Clarke

DNAP -
Remind Dr of 3 vacancies
absentee policy

Inactive minors

OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

750 17th Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20503
Phone: 202-632-1090
Fax: 202-632-1096

FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

TO: Dr. Eric Goosby

FAX NUMBER: 690-7560

FROM: Daniel C. Montoya

DATE: April 9, 1997

PAGES INCLUDING COVER SHEET: 6

COMMENTS:

According to Toby's E-mail:

I am sending around Dan's draft copy of the VP's remarks for AIDS Action tonight.

Please read through the draft and join us on a conference call with Dan at 2:00 pm -- and have all of your comments and suggested changes ready.

The call # is 456-6777 and code is 2001.

Thanks and I'll speak to you at 2.

I left a voice mail with Toby re: your comments on Needle exchange to call me if she didn't receive them. I will forward any suggestions refinements as soon as I have had a chance to read it thoroughly.

Take care,

dcm

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

750 17th Street
Washington, DC 20503
Phone: 202-632-1090
Fax: 202-632-1096

FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

TO: Richard Sorian

FAX NUMBER: 690-7318

FROM: Daniel C. Montoya

DATE: April 9, 1997

PAGES INCLUDING COVER SHEET: 2

COMMENTS:

RS:

Can you provide me any comments/suggestions ASAP. Toby knows that you provided the suggested language on needle exchange as well as other suggestions and was very appreciative of your input.

Thanks for the help!

dcm

TO: ERIC GOOSBY
DANIEL MUNTOYA
BY FAX 632-1096

DRAFT: 4/9/97; 9:37am

Remarks of Vice President Al Gore
AIDS Action
7th Annual National Leadership Awards
Washington, DC
April 9, 1997

[Acknowledgments from advance]

Thank you for this wonderful award. And thank you for honoring all that Tipper Gore, my partner, has done to raise awareness of AIDS, to heal those who hurt, and to work to end this epidemic. Whether reading names at the Names Project, or placing panels on the fence of our home at the Naval Observatory, or participating in all those AIDS walks, Tipper has been an inspiration. Thank you for letting me bask in her reflected glory.

I'm humbled by this award, because I am humbled by all of you. Tonight -- gathered in this grand theater -- are the hidden heroes of the crusade against AIDS. All of you are on the front lines; that's where any battle is always toughest. But each day you return. Bringing meals on wheels. Organizing buddy systems so nobody will ever fall out of the community's sight. Delivering the care people with AIDS need to get better, or maybe just hang on a little longer.

So tonight I want to do more than thank you for presenting Tipper and me this award. I want to thank you for the work you do every day of your lives. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for your energy, your commitment, and your tireless devotion to a cause larger than any single one of us.

And, of course, thank you for keeping our feet to the fire. If all citizens used their vocal chords and their e-mail and the fax machines as skillfully as the AIDS community, this country would have made a lot more progress on a lot more problems. I appreciate your input and ideas. And I pledge to you that my door -- and that Tipper's door -- is always open.

The AIDS virus is too sinister and too wily to succumb to any single opponent. We've got to work together. This must be a partnership. A partnership of those living with HIV and with AIDS, the community of care

givers and care providers, AIDS activists, local and national AIDS organizations, and the federal government -- especially the White House. If I may paraphrase the First Lady, it takes a village to end an epidemic.

And I want you to know that the President and I -- along with Tipper, the First Lady, and the entire administration -- are committed to strengthening this partnership. We're committed to working together to get people better -- and in the end, to find a cure for this dread disease. Let me tell you some of the things we're doing to supplement the extraordinary efforts you are making on the front lines.

For starters, earlier this week, the President appointed a new director of the Office of National AIDS Policy, Sandy Thurman. Many of you know her. As the President said, she speaks the truth unvarnished. And that's exactly what we need. Her presence gives the AIDS community a powerful, effective, and credible voice at the center of the debate. I could not be more excited about having someone of her caliber at the table, making decisions. This was a great choice. And, Sandy, I know you will do a great job.

Sandy will help implement President Clinton's National AIDS strategy -- six broad national goals and a plan for achieving them. I know that some people -- some people in this audience perhaps -- may have small disagreements about the exact components of this action plan. But on one matter there can be no disagreement: this is the first national AIDS strategy in history. Let's work together to make it truly historic.

The plan Sandy will oversee will be implemented on the foundation of slow and steady progress we have built these last four years. We've boosted investments in AIDS research, prevention, and services by 60 percent. Ryan White funding has increased 158 percent. We've speeded up the FDA approval process -- leading to the approval of eight new AIDS drugs and 19 drugs for AIDS-related conditions.

And I'm delighted to announce this evening that we will soon be taking steps to bring those cutting-edge drugs to more people -- by expanding Medicaid coverage. Specifically, I've asked the Health Care Financing Administration to come up with a plan to move Medicaid eligibility closer to the sero-conversion point. At the moment, people with HIV must wait until their T-cells reach

extremely high levels or until they obtain a diagnosis of full-blown AIDS before they're eligible for Medicaid. That makes some of these new drugs prohibitively expensive for people who need them. And it says the only way you're going to get them is to get a lot sicker. That's got to change. The exact details are being worked out now. And I've asked HCFA to report back to me in 30 days. But this is a very important step. It will ease suffering, renew hope, and help ensure that good people aren't priced out of life-saving medicine.

It's more urgent than ever, too, because progress on new drugs the past few years has been nothing short of remarkable. Already the FDA has approved four protease inhibitors, and they are saving lives. There is new research being done to develop new types of inhibitors. And scientists are working to develop and bring to market imuno-potentiators, drugs that boost immune systems.

As some of you may know, about a year ago, I brought representatives of the major pharmaceutical companies and leading government researchers to my office to begin mapping a strategy for finding and developing more AIDS therapeutics, microbicides, and ultimately, a vaccine. This partnership has helped speed approval and get drugs to people who need them. I've been as proud of working to move these drugs along as I have of anything else I've done as Vice President. And I pledge to you tonight, I'll keep working until the drug we're getting on the market is the AIDS vaccine.

Groups like yours have played an enormous role in building awareness of the fruits of new research. You are the people who spend the most time with the patients themselves, and you have served as a catalyst and a conduit for this information. Your groups and others have also used the Internet to spread the word. I began my career as a newspaper reporter, and the press is missing this great story. The Internet has been essential in getting AIDS information to people who need it and don't have time to waste. As new tests are performed, the results are posted. And people who are interested can see the results right away. Just as Virginia highways have HOV lanes, the information highway has an HIV lane that is making a real difference in people's lives.

Indeed, of all the times during this epidemic, this moment is probably the most optimistic. People who thought they were certain to die, are now living healthy and virus-free lives. Deaths from AIDS are dropping for the first time ever. The estimated number of new infections has slowed. Education and

prevention efforts are expanding. And for the first time, we can see -- maybe not immediately, but sometime within our view -- an AIDS vaccine. That remains our ultimate goal: getting rid of this disease once and for all. And at long last, we can imagine it's actually possible.

But this burst of good news doesn't mean the epidemic is over. Far from it. We've got a long way to go before we beat this monster.

And something else is equally clear: the emergence of new drugs doesn't mean we can short-change care-givers; it doesn't mean we can compromise the work of the people serving people with AIDS. It wasn't until 1991 that the federal government even invested any money in care for people with AIDS. That was well after the epidemic had begun, well after good people had passed away. We cannot turn our back on the people who have shouldered so much of the burden of this disease. And even though budgets are tight, and Congress is not exactly welcoming, you have my word that this Administration will fight for the people doing the front line work all of you undertake every single day. If we don't give a damn about care, how can we expect anyone to care about giving a damn?

And while this is a time of optimism, we face other adversaries besides light budgets, a tough Congress, and a mean virus. We face the adversary of homophobia. Let me say it plain: there is no room in American medicine or American life for discriminating against people because of their sexual orientation. Gays and lesbians are part of the American family, and to try to exclude them or punish them for who they are is just plain wrong. We will not stand for it.

We face the adversary of racism. We cannot turn our eyes from the devastation this epidemic has unleashed in communities of color. The AIDS virus doesn't discriminate. Neither should we. This isn't a white disease or a black disease. It's a human disease. And that's how we've got to address it.

And finally, we face the adversary of indifference -- a lack of concern bred in part by the latest good news and by the sense among many that this is someone else's illness. This is perhaps the gravest threat, because it is so difficult to identify.

And here the work you do is also so critical. You have seen the face of this disease, and that sight has meant you cannot be indifferent. But you must continue to educate and inspire others -- to shake them from their natural inclination to look the other way.

We cannot be indifferent -- in part because AIDS itself is indifferent. It is indifferent to wealth or gender or sexual orientation or race or just about anything else. AIDS revels in its indifference, and is happy to live wherever it can find a home. AIDS lives in our offices. It lives in our schools. It lives on our block.

Tipper and I know that. A few years ago, when we lived in Arlington, Virginia, Jim Nichols, our neighbor a few doors down, died of AIDS. We watched him go, comforted him in his final days. Even in a calm, nice neighborhood, AIDS lived on our block. We cannot be indifferent.

Last year, as Tipper mentioned, when she and I visited the AIDS quilt on the mall -- all 11 city blocks of it -- we read Jim's name and the names of 70 others who had perished from this disease. And there on the Washington Mall, between all those other monuments, was this quilted monument of grief -- thousands upon thousands of names of people who did not have to die. They lived on America's block. We cannot be indifferent.

But that quilt and those panels also embodied hope. The hope that comes from remembering. The hope that comes from the notion that our lives, all of our lives, are somehow stitched together. The hope that comes from the knowledge that once we're touched by AIDS, we cannot be indifferent ever again.

Thank you for all you're doing to eradicate indifference. Thank you for your part in this partnership. Together, we will end this epidemic. And until we do, we will never, ever stop fighting.

###

OFFICE OF NATIONAL AIDS POLICY
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

750 17th Street
Washington, DC 20503

Phone: 202-632-1090
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FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

TO: Toby Donenfeld

FAX NUMBER: 456-6231

FROM: Daniel C. Montoya

DATE: April 9, 1997

PAGES INCLUDING COVER SHEET: 4

COMMENTS: Please let me know if you need anything.

HHS NEWS

DRAFT #62

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: HRSA Press Office
(301) 443-3376

HHS ANNOUNCES $398 MILLION IN GRANTS TO STATES FOR HIV/AIDS CARE AND MEDICATIONS

Health and Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala today announced $398 million in formula grant awards to improve the quality, availability and organization of health care and support services for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families in states, U.S. territories, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. This amount includes $167 million earmarked for state AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs) to help low-income individuals pay for HIV medications.

The grants are funded under Title II of the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act, which provides HIV/AIDS care to low-income, uninsured and underinsured individuals affected by the epidemic. The CARE Act is administered by HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration.

"These annual CARE Act grants help states provide HIV/AIDS care and support for thousands of Americans each year," said Secretary Shalala. "I am particularly heartened by the large increase in ADAP funding, which rose by 221 percent under President Clinton's leadership."

Title II formula grants are based on a calculation of the estimated number of people living with AIDS in each state or territory. Since FY 1996, separate funds have been earmarked under

- More -

#62 DRAFT

Title II to support state ADAPs in purchasing pharmaceuticals for low-income people living with HIV/AIDS. States also may designate a portion of their Title II formula grant to support ADAPs.

Since the CARE Act was first funded in FY 1991, nearly $1.3 billion in Title II grants has been awarded.

"Ryan White funds extend a vital lifeline to low-income individuals with HIV/AIDS," said Acting HRSA Administrator Claude Earl Fox, M.D., M.P.H. "In FY 1991, nearly $1.3 billion in Title II grants has been awarded for health care and support services."

States have received $219 million in earmarked ADAP funds since FY 1996. The FY 1997 Title II and ADAP grant awards are attached.

###

Note: HHS press releases are available on the World Wide Web at: http:\\www.dhhs.gov.

DRAFT

STATE	FORMULA GRANT AWARD	AIDS DRUG ASST PROG AWARD	TOTAL GRANT AWARD
ALABAMA	$ 2,838,265	$ 1,329,706	$ 4,167,971
ALASKA	250,000	112,917	326,917
ARIZONA	2,045,462	1,450,752	3,497,214
ARKANSAS	1,395,995	654,013	2,050,008
CALIFORNIA	31,548,137	26,371,892	57,920,029
COLORADO	2,127,037	1,607,932	3,734,969
CONNECTICUT	3,330,036	2,790,394	6,120,430
DELAWARE	1,322,724	619,686	1,942,410
DIST. OF COL.	2,877,431	2,613,341	5,490,772
FLORIDA	23,416,364	17,898,632	41,314,996
GEORGIA	7,214,630	5,125,509	12,340,139
HAWAII	1,158,830	542,903	1,701,733
IDAHO	250,000	112,917	362,917
ILLINOIS	6,606,747	5,427,222	12,033,969
INDIANA	2,928,889	1,372,162	4,301,051
IOWA	624,726	292,680	917,406
KANSAS	997,168	568,196	1,565,364
KENTUCKY	1,415,277	663,046	2,078,323
LOUISIANA	4,252,105	2,717,224	6,969,329
MAINE	489,755	229,446	719,201
MARYLAND	5,923,285	5,025,239	10,948,524
MASSACHUSETTS	4,252,105	3,310,714	7,528,256
MICHIGAN	3,405,961	2,408,285	5,814,246
MINNESOTA	1,037,082	841,003	1,878,085
MISSISSIPPI	1,879,965	880,749	2,760,714
MISSOURI	2,620,796	1,965,652	4,586,448
MONTANA	136,900	64,137	201,037
NEBRASKA	499,395	233,963	733,358
NEVADA	2,043,859	957,533	3,001,392
NEW HAMPSHIRE	314,204	214,993	529,197
NEW JERSEY	11,931,930	9,448,859	21,380,789
NEW MEXICO	805,975	377,593	1,183,568
NEW YORK	34,972,364	29,381,796	64,354,160
NORTH CAROLINA	4,803,070	2,250,201	7,053,271
NORTH DAKOTA	100,000	24,390	124,390
OHIO	4,739,289	2,577,208	7,316,497
OKLAHOMA	1,554,105	728,086	2,282,191
OREGON	1,601,172	1,148,136	2,749,308
PENNSYLVANIA	7,686,648	5,258,299	12,944,947
PUERTO RICO	7,605,266	5,315,209	12,920,475
RHODE ISLAND	1,054,708	494,123	1,548,831
SOUTH CAROLINA	4,509,988	2,112,895	6,622,883
SOUTH DAKOTA	100,000	38,843	138,843
TENNESSEE	3,906,471	1,830,152	5,736,623
TEXAS	14,636,207	11,061,308	25,697,515
UTAH	852,251	399,273	1,251,524
VERMONT	250,000	92,140	342,140
VIRGINIA	5,235,047	2,881,631	8,116,678
WASHINGTON	2,830,277	2,067,728	4,898,005
WEST VIRGINIA	492,843	247,513	740,356
WISCONSIN	1,755,689	823,839	2,579,528
WYOMING	100,000	37,940	137,940
GUAM	11,608	0	11,608
VIRGIN ISLANDS	191,525	0	191,525
TOTAL	**$230,895,000**	**$167,000,000**	**$397,895,000**

rsorian @ os.dhhs.gov
04/08/97 03:42:00 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Daniel C. Montoya

cc:
Subject: Re: AIDS Action

The accomplishements list is current as is. Nothing new other than the appointment of Sandy Thurman.

On needle exchange, he should have a paragraph in a briefing that is something like: "HHS is currently reviewing the scientific evidence on the effectiveness of needle exchange programs on HIV transmission and drug use. No action is anticipated in the near-term but we continue to work with our scientists and public health professionals on this important matter."

What Medicaid announcement is she referring to? I'm not aware on one.

HHS is releasing a press release tomorrow on the awarding of $400 million in Ryan White awards to the states including ADAP money. The Veep's office knows about this and may be planning to include it in his remarks.

Finally, I would be glad to review the VP's remarks tomorrow if that would be helpful.

Original Text
From: Daniel_C._Montoya@oa.eop.gov, on 4/8/97 4:31 PM:
Message Creation Date was at 8-APR-1997 16:31:00

Hi,

I need your help. Is it possible for you to draft some information for Toby.
I will be happy to send her the Accomplishments piece. But I would like your
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Thanks,

dcm
---------- Forwarded by Daniel C. Montoya/OPD/EOP on 04/08/97 04:33
PM ----------

Toby Donenfeld @ OVP

04/08/97 12:34:24 PM
Record Type: Record

To: Eric P. Goosby/OPD/EOP, Daniel C. Montoya/OPD/EOP
cc:
Subject: AIDS Action

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to you for review.

I was just thinking through what kind of background info we should give the VP
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pretty good shape, but I wanted to check in with you. Thanks.

Sandy Thurman
Director
Office of National AIDS Policy
808 17th Street
8th Floor
Washington, DC 20006

Mr. Rob Wherry
Research Department--George
1633 Broadway
41st Floor
New York, NY 10019
Fax: (212) 767-5622

Dear Rob,

I have attempted to answer as many questions with "yes" or "no" as possible (see attached). However, several of the questions and "quotes" required further explanation or clarification.

I must say that the lack of inquiries regarding the AIDS office and the abundance of references to me personally is of some concern to me. Judging from the questions, it would appear that John did not have an opportunity to get input from anyone who knows me well or anyone with whom I have worked closely in the past. If, by chance, you would like a little more substantive input I would be happy to make some recommendations.

1.Washington is the type of town where things get done based as much on who you know as what you know....the "what" is a given (in this town, if you don't have the "what", you more than likely wouldn't" be here in the first place).

4.I do not remember mentioning Mary in our conversation. I do not know her personally, however I have great admiration for her.

5. I come from a politically and civically active background. I certainly had more advantages than the average kid growing up, but I would not consider us wealthy.

7. James and I became very good friends during the Miller campaign (in fact the

Governor introduced us) and we have remained friends.

9.I would describe my work in the Georgia primary as meaningful and Clinton's victory as a defining moment in the campaign.

11. The previous directors didn't have the same kind of access that I have in part because they didn't come to the job with the political experience and existing relationships within the Administration that resulted from my work over the years on campaigns, conventions, etc.

13.I do prefer to deal with people face to face, in the hall, over lunch and at receptions. I find that sort of informal and direct interaction to be much more effective than endless memos and meetings.

20.*One* local gay newspaper printed *one* story insinuating that I was paying for my clothes out of AID Atlanta's budget, and complaining that I drove an expensive automobile (a BMW to be exact, which I happened to have had when I went to work at the Agency). The article appeared following my being named one of Atlanta's 10 best dressed executives by our leading business magazine. There was some criticism regarding my continued involvement in fundraising activities for several other causes, such as the Ballet and the March of Dimes, that I had been involved in for many years prior to my involvement in AIDS. Those activities did, on occasion, land me on the society pages. And, AIDS and AID Atlanta did, in fact, land in the news.

22. I had never heard the Imelda Marcos reference until my appointment to this job. It was in a press release from Act-up, but nobody seems to know where the reference came from. I suppose if they couldn't criticize my accomplishments they had to head for my closets!

23. This reference was to the original article that I referred to in #20, where I was criticized for wearing designer clothes and driving a BMW. My response was indicating that some critics had a difficult time reconciling their image of me with the kind of work I was doing.Had I dressed like some aging hippie and driven an old VW I think their comfort level might have been elevated. In their view, I suppose, the proverbial book didn't match the cover. However, all of our grandmothers warned us not to judge a book by it's cover.

24.I certainly did not characterize the White House decision to make me AIDS czar as "tacky". Had I thought that I obviously would not have taken the job. However, I may well have jokingly referred to having them ask me to consider taking the job just after I had gotten settled into the job I had wanted all my life as "tacky".It was sort of like signing up for duty in Bali and then getting asked to volunteer for an important assignment in Bosnia!

26. Washington can be dull at times because the functions, both political and social, are

often lacking in good conversation. It tends to centered on the same old stuff....work, work, work. Not much new and different

28 .The office *was* a bit "crummy" before it was cleaned up and painted. Now it looks great. And it is close enough to everyone in the White House to whom we might need access.

Thanks so much for taking the time to confirm this information.

I hope this is helpful. If you have any questions or need additional information, please give me a call at (202) 632-1090.

Sincerely,

Sandy

Sandy Thurman

Rob Wherry
Research Dept.--George
1633 Broadway
41st Floor
New York, NY 10019
(212) 767-6223
Fax: (212) 767-5622

Daniel Montoya
Press Secretary--Office of National Aids Policy
Washington, DC
Fax: (202) 632-1096

Dear Mr. Montoya:

As per our conversation earlier this afternoon, I am faxing a list of questions to confirm information in a story by John Cloud on Sandra Thurman. Hopefully all the questions will be "yes" or "no" answers and won't take a lot of time. Please feel free to correct the statements in any way, or to question them. Some of the questions involve confirming quotes that she said (i.e. question #1) and will be noted with an asterisk so as to refresh your memory.

My deadline is late Wednesday.

Thanks for the cooperation.

Rob Wherry

Questions:

*1. Is it correct that Washington is the type of town where things get done based on who you know and not what you know? See attached

2. Is it correct that you are 43 and will be that age until after July 15 (Press date)? yes

3. Is it correct that you have a slight southern accent? yes

4. Do you remember mentioning James Carville and his wife Mary Matalin, Bruce Reed and Michael Iskowitz during the interview with Mr. Cloud? See attached

5. You come from a wealthy family background? See attached

6. You met Bill Clinton in 1992 through Carville? yes

PAGE TWO/QUESTIONS:

7. You dated James Carville?

8. At the time he was a consultant for Georgia Governor Zell Miller? yes

*9. Would you describe your help with the Georgia primary and Clinton's winning there, a defining moment in the campaign? See attached

10. Have you ever shopped in Paris or New York? I have shopped everyplace I have ever been!

11. Would it be accurate to describe some of the previous directors as unknown bureaucrats with little access to the White House? (This isn't attributed to you, but I would like to confirm the author's opinion) See attached ~

12. Are you a ~~furious~~ determined networker?

*13. Would you describe a part of your philosophy of government as dealing with people face-to-face, in the hall or at cocktails parties. Forcing them to deal with issues at once instead of sitting on memos. See attached

14. You have had several family friends die early on in the epidemic? yes

15. You started volunteering in 1983? yes

*16. Your friends at the time thought it was unusual for you to do that? yes, and so did everybody else - AIDS was very new -

17. In 1989 you were named executive director of AID Atlanta (It is AID Atlanta and not AIDS Atlanta?)? yes

18. It is the south's largest AIDS organization? yes

19. You quadrupled the budget and erased a $200,000 deficit? yes

20. Some activists in Atlanta thought you had a clothing budget and criticized you landing on the gossip pages instead of the news section? See attached

21. You didn't have a clothing allowance? of course not!

22. Some have called you the Imelda Marcos of the AIDS world. see attached

*23. You fired back by saying that you weren't some aging hippie, that you drove a BMW, wore ~~nice~~ designer clothes but got the job done.

*24 Did you describe the White House decision to make you AIDS czar as "tacky" because you had turned it down before and loved your current job at the Information Agency? see attached

25 You were at the previous job for three months? yes

*26. Washington can be dull at times because the cocktail parties are lacking good conversation or

PAGE THREE/QUESTIONS:

something new besides all the old stuff? see attached

27. You have secured office space in the Old Executive Office Building? yes

*28. It is "crummy" but close enough for good access to Clinton? see attached

29. ~~Your~~ One of my next missionsis to sit down with Barry McCaffrey and discuss ~~the~~ needle exchange program.

*30. And you termed that meeting as being one that could be "very interesting." yes - he is very nice and very smart.

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FAX COVER SHEET

TO: SANDY

FROM: TODD

DATE: 6/24

SUBJECT:

TOTAL PAGES: __ (including cover sheet)

FAX NUMBER: 202-632-1096

☐ URGENT ☒ FYI ☐ PLEASE COMMENT ☐ AS REQUESTED

Hey you!
Nice photos.

Bay Windows

June 12 - June 18, 1997 New England's Largest Gay and Lesbian Newspaper Vol. 15, No. 25 50 cents at newsstands

Pride photos: pages 26-29

AIDS Czar Czeitgeist

Newly-appointed Sandy Thurman on the President, her critics, and the battles that lie ahead

by Fred Kuhr
Bay Windows staff

"This is an awesome responsibility, one which will demand that each of us work together in partnership to end this epidemic," said the newly-named director of the National Office of AIDS Policy, Sandy Thurman, during the April 7 announcement of her appointment.

Prior to Thurman's acceptance speech, President Clinton called her a person who "tells it like it is, she speaks the truth unvarnished, she won't hold back in this office....She is passionate. She is committed. She is difficult to say no to...And I have already assured her that she will have the support and the resources she will need, including my personal support, to succeed in this all-important task. My door is open to her."

AIDS advocates are hoping that Clinton is true to his word and that Thurman has that kind of access to the President.

After all, controversy has plagued the National Office of AIDS Policy ever since Clinton

Continued on page 16

PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Bill Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore flank Sandra Thurman April 7 at the White House announcement of her appointment as the nation's third so-called AIDS Czar — a position for which she told Bay Windows this week she was uniquely qualified not as a bureaucrat, but rather as someone who's fought on the front lines of the epidemic.

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Interview with Sandra Thurman

Continued from page 1

created it in his first term. Critics have called the office, and its leadership, ineffective at best and a waste of resources at worst.

As compared to her predecessors, however, Thurman has been turning heads — both with her no-nonsense attitude as well as her experience volunteering with and eventually running AID Atlanta, the oldest and largest AIDS service organization in the Southeast.

In fact, with Thurman as executive director, AID Atlanta tripled in size and became a multi-million dollar, direct-service agency with 90 staff members and over 1,000 volunteers.

Upon her announcement, many organizations came out praising Thurman. "She brings the right mix of leadership, political skills and commitment to the fight against HIV and AIDS," commented Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign.

Daniel Zingale, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based AIDS Action Council, called Thurman's appointment "an important step forward ... [in] gaining the upper hand in the fight against AIDS."

After two months of settling into her new position, Thurman was finally able to take a few minutes to talk with Bay Windows June 9 about her work, her critics, and the battles that lie ahead.

Bay Windows: What do you see as the role of an "AIDS czar"?

Thurman: More than anything else, it's a strategic planning position. That means that the person in this position should facilitate the collaboration and coordination among the agencies that are doing the front-line HIV and AIDS work, like Health and Human Services (HHS) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Also, [the AIDS czar] is to make recommendations to the administration, particularly the president, on what we think should or shouldn't be done.

BW: Do you have a good working relationship with the President?

Thurman: Our relationship is really open and honest. I've known him since 1992 while I was working on his campaign in Georgia. I had thought him to be very responsive and a person who will hear things that are unpleasant pretty comfort

idea of keeping people at home when they were sick and dying. Then, I took that work and walked right into the AIDS epidemic. My father was in the fashion industry and my family had been very involved in the arts so people very close to my family and people I'd known all my life were hit early on in the epidemic. So I started providing respite care for friends [and] loved ones who were sick as early as 1983.

BW: How do you respond to critics who say your position has no power?

Thurman: I think the criticism is understandable. I think these kinds of positions, the "czar" positions, are what the people in those positions make of them. They are made or broken based on the kind of support they have from the ... president, the vice-president, the folks at the White House. One of the reasons I agreed to take this job was that the White House ... convinced me that I would have their full support. And I've experienced that so far.

BW: How do you think you compare to your predecessors, Kristine Gebbie and Patricia Fleming?

Thurman: Both of them were smart and involved in the epidemic for a long time, but had more of a bureaucratic experience than I have had and no political experience whatsoever, and no experience running a business or a community-based organization. I think one of the things making the tone of this office different under my management is that we're running it more like a community-based organization....And I have a lot more contact directly with the White House...We have two offices, and one of them is in the White House complex.

BW: Why was the decision made to have another office closer to the White House?

Thurman: Because I insisted on it. One of the things that's really important in doing things in a non-bureaucratic way is my tendency to work on an informal basis. Since I have a lot of colleagues in the White House, I find that being able to walk into somebody's office or grab somebody in the hall or run into somebody in the lunch room is often more effective in getting things d

...work, her critics, and the battles that lie ahead.

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BW: Do you have a good working relationship with the President?

Thurman: Our relationship is really open and honest. I've known him since 1992 while I was working on his campaign in Georgia. I had thought him to be very responsive and a person who will hear things that are unpleasant pretty comfortably. I found that to be very refreshing. He's not a person who likes to surround himself with "yes" people.... And he didn't get that when he got me.

BW: After leaving AID Atlanta in 1993, you served as director of advocacy programs at The Task Force for Child Survival and Development at The Carter Center in Atlanta. How do you think your experience will help you now?

Thurman: Well, having been involved in the epidemic for 13 years, having run the largest community-based organization in the Southeast, and actually having the hands-on experience, both as a volunteer and a professional in the AIDS business, [I have] a sense of what it's like on the frontlines of the epidemic that my predecessors didn't necessarily have....That coupled with my experience in international advocacy focusing on children's issues...is a nice combination. Plus, [I have] the political experience on the campaigns. I think it's a nice combination to work with both the community and within the White House and merge those two in a way that can craft effective yet responsive policy.

BW: Do you have a personal connection to the epidemic?

Thurman: I got involved very early in the epidemic....My father died when I was in my 20s and I got... involved in the whole

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BW: Mississippi recently announced that because of a lack of funding some people would be kicked off their regimen of protease inhibitors. How do you respond to that?

Thurman: I think we've got to look at what the federal government can do about this. Mississippi happens to be a state that doesn't put any of their own money into ADAP (AIDS Drug Assistance Program) funding. So as we look at how ... we release federal money to states like Mississippi, we'll have to come up with ways that are equitable for everyone. You have states like New York and California putting tremendous amounts of their own money into ADAP funding and then some states like Mississippi not paying for any AIDS drugs at all.

Continued on next page

THURMAN
Continued from previous page

BW: But many complications can result from taking people off protease inhibitors. What can be done?

Thurman: That's a hard question. What do we do. It's a horrible thing. it's a horrible place to be, but HHS isn't in a position where they can hand out money every time somebody runs out of it. It's horrible that a state like Mississippi isn't doing something more for their people with HIV and AIDS, but as we look at what we do down the line, we're going to have to find ways that we get money to states that need it, that we don't give more money to the states that don't need it. We've got to look at the whole way we fund ADAP programs and come up with something that's equitable.

PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS

"The biggest battle is that I think we have reached a point in the epidemic ... that we in the AIDS community are never going to see the kinds of funding increases in the future that we've enjoyed in the past," Thurman says.

BW: What is the U.S. role in the global epidemic?

Thurman: It's important to begin to put our epidemic in the context of a global epidemic....In our lifetime, we will never see the development of health care systems in the developing world that will allow people to have the kinds of treatments that we have in the U.S. It just isn't going to happen. In most of sub-Saharan Africa, urban [illegible]

BW: What's your opinion of needle exchange programs?

Thurman: We've got to begin to move where science tells us we need to go. And we need to take as much of the politics out of public health policy as possible....We are going to look hard at the science to see whether to move on this. My concern about lifting the prohibition of funding for needle exchange programs is that ... the Congress, as conservative as it is on these issues, would have a knee-jerk reaction and then do to us what happened to us on gays-in-the-military and the immigration issue. If we act before we've done our homework with our colleagues on the Hill, we'll end up in a worse place than we were when we started. I think that's not acceptable for those who need the needle exchange programs on the frontlines.

BW: How do issues such as homophobia and racism hinder the fight against AIDS?

Thurman: Homophobia, racism, classism and sexism have a tremendous impact on our fight against HIV and AIDS and continue to hinder in ways that are really significant....If you look at where the epidemic is moving, it's into communities that have been traditionally disenfranchised — communities of color, women...If the community-at-large isn't going to come to the support of people who aren't just like them, we hit homophobia and racism right in the face. The more we can do to help along the gay community, communities of color, the women's community out of this office and elevate this issue as a public health issue, we'll begin to make some progress.

BW: Do you think AIDS is still viewed as a gay disease?

Thurman: I think there's still a misconception in the country, and it's something we have to begin to change. And that's touchy because we don't want to leave the fact that this has been a devastating disease in the gay community, but it's also a devastating disease in [other] communities....And I'm not sure we've effectively communicated that to the American public and Congress.

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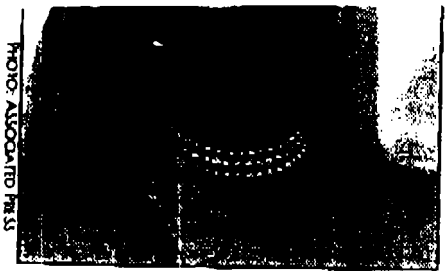

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Thurman: It's important to begin to put our epidemic in the context of a global epidemic....In our lifetime, we will never see the development of health care systems in the developing world that will allow people to have the kinds of treatments that we have in the U.S. It just isn't going to happen. In most of sub-Saharan Africa, where we have probably the greatest impact of the epidemic anyplace in the world at the present time, we still have people dying of malaria and tuberculosis, and we can't even get clean water to people to take medicine, much less worry about protease inhibitors. It's just not feasible at this point in time in the rest of the world, which is pretty awful. So we have to look at other ways to do prevention and treatment....That's why I think it's important for the U.S. to take a leadership role in the development of a vaccine or vaccines.

BW: How do you respond to people worried that they will lose their Medicaid benefits if they go back to work after seeing progress with protease inhibitors?

Thurman: We are going to have to look at Medicaid and all our other service delivery systems that are funded under [the Ryan White CARE Act] and retool and revamp in order to respond to where the epidemic is today. Most of our response ... is predicated on the epidemic 10 or 15 years ago. We've got to begin to look at ways to support people who have HIV and AIDS including those going back to work and how we make adjustments ... so people don't lose their benefits....We've got to go where the epidemic is going. That means changes on a lot of fronts and this is just one of them.

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BW: What are the major battles that lie ahead?

Thurman: The biggest battle is that I think we have reached a point in the epidemic ... that we in the AIDS community are never going to see the kinds of funding increases in the future that we've enjoyed in the past. I think that's a huge issue, in part, because of the balanced budget, but also because AIDS has become institutionalized. Fifteen years into the epidemic, AIDS is no longer the disease du jour....We've lost our sense of urgency in many ways. It's important for us to focus on and maintain a sense of urgency around this epidemic. Our loss of urgency has been exacerbated by the advent of protease inhibitors and that many people think this epidemic is over, that it is a treatable disease so we don't have to focus on a cure as we once did. That's a big battle for us.

BW: With all these obstacles, what keeps you going?

Thurman: Well, I'm not sure that I won't burn out, but what keeps me going from day to day is working with people in the community. It's having so many people that I love being HIV-infected. They are part of my life everyday. They are my friends, they are my loved ones, they are my colleagues. As long as they are in this battle, I am going to be in this battle. ▼