



January 20, 2005

The Honorable Tommy G. Thompson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Thompson:

I am writing in support of the Ryan White CARE Act Title I grant application for the New York Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA) for FY 2005. While I understand the fiscal year 2005 federal appropriation for Title I of the Ryan White CARE Act is expected to be level funded, I respectfully request that the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) provide the New York EMA with \$134,084,917 in vital Title I funding – the full amount requested in the grant application.

New York City remains the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS epidemic nationally, with almost 89,000 New Yorkers diagnosed and known to be living with HIV, including 57,316 diagnosed with AIDS and at least an estimated 25,000 additional people living with HIV but not yet diagnosed. In 2003 alone the number of reported new HIV/AIDS cases was 4,086, which surpasses the total number of people living with AIDS in many U.S. cities. With less than 3% of the U.S. population, the New York EMA has almost 16% of people living with AIDS. New York had the highest rate of new AIDS cases in both 2001 and 2002, and the number of people living with AIDS has doubled in the last nine years.

New York has a complex epidemic where people living with HIV and AIDS have a high percentage of co-morbidities (such as serious mental health problems, intravenous drug use, and other sexually transmitted diseases) and persons in extreme poverty that are concentrated in traditionally marginalized populations. Among people living with HIV/AIDS, 73% of the recently diagnosed have incomes under \$10,000 annually, 77% are minority, and fewer than 10% have private health insurance.

We share with you an understanding of the difficulties placed on the Department of Health and Human Services and the Health Resources and Services Administration by flat funding of Title I of the Ryan White CARE Act. Meanwhile, the Centers for Disease Control initiative "Advancing HIV Prevention: New Strategies for a Changing Epidemic," launched in April 2003, will significantly increase the demand for HIV-related care and services in communities across our country and within the New York EMA. This initiative to help HIV-infected

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