



NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME

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STATEMENT ON THE AIDS PREVENTION ACT (H.R.4470) & THE MEDICAID AIDS AND HIV AMENDMENTS ACT (H.R.4080)

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The National Commission on AIDS endorses the principles and objectives of the AIDS Prevention Act of 1990 (H.R.4470) and the Medicaid AIDS and HIV Amendments Act of 1990 (H.R.4080). This legislation is responsive to many of the recommendations of the National Commission on AIDS and the Presidential Commission on the HIV Epidemic.

There must be frank recognition that a health care crisis exists in many of our cities that will require extraordinary measures to overcome. The HIV epidemic of the 1990's will be far worse than what we have seen thus far. Our Nation simply must be prepared to invest adequate resources now or pay dearly later.

The AIDS Prevention Act of 1990 will provide emergency funds to those areas hardest hit by the epidemic. It will expand the availability of HIV testing and counseling and the accessibility of early intervention drugs which have been found to prolong life and prevent serious deterioration of health for those with HIV infection and AIDS. This legislation will also authorize demonstration projects that will provide comprehensive treatment services for HIV infection and AIDS.

The Medicaid AIDS and HIV Amendments Act of 1990 will provide states with the option to expand Medicaid services to provide home and community based services for children with AIDS, to assure continuity of private insurance coverage for people with HIV infection and AIDS, and to expand availability of early intervention drugs under Medicaid for income eligible individuals with compromised immune systems. This legislation also recognizes the financial problems now facing hospitals treating individuals with AIDS and HIV infection.

The health care system in this country is not working well and nowhere is that more evident than for people with HIV infection and AIDS. While AIDS is not the cause of the health care system's disarray, its epidemic nature has accelerated the urgent need for responsible national action to correct the system's serious shortfalls.

The Commission is pleased that these bills are moving forth in the legislative process and looks forward to the passage and funding of comprehensive AIDS care legislation by the 101st Congress.