



**AIDS CARE AND TREATMENT
IN OUR NATION**
ryanwhiteaction.org

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**NEW COALITION LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN
TO REAUTHORIZE RYAN WHITE CARE ACT**

Ryan White ACTION Campaign announced today

Washington, DC (September 21, 2005)-- Four national HIV/AIDS organizations have launched the Ryan White ACTION (AIDS Care and Treatment In Our Nation) Campaign (RWAC) to raise public awareness of the need to renew the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act. The CARE Act, which expires September 30, funds critically important federal and state government programs for poor, uninsured and underinsured people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States. Congress is unlikely to renew the program by September 30, but the program will continue to operate in its current form over the next several months until legislation is approved.

The RWAC coalition consists of The AIDS Institute, the HIV Medicine Association, the American Academy of HIV Medicine, and the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors. The launch of the campaign was announced today by Jeanne White-Ginder, the mother of the late Ryan White and a board member of The AIDS Institute.

“We urge the Congress to move expeditiously, and, more importantly, for the Congress and the [Bush] Administration to provide adequate funding for the CARE Act so that everyone who is in need of these lifesaving medications and medical care, no matter where they live, can have the chance to stay alive,” said White-Ginder.

The RWAC was formed with the assistance of a grant from the Gill Foundation and four other foundations. The group is not only concerned about timely approval of a new bill, but in broadening and expanding the existing programs under the CARE Act. The program has essentially been flat-funded for the past several years, which coalition members say does not keep up with changes in the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in recent years. New infections tend to be concentrated among the poor, minority populations and people without health insurance. And while urban areas continue to account for the largest concentration of infections, the virus is rapidly spreading into rural areas, particularly in the South.



“We are grateful to the Gill Foundation and its funding partners for their foresight and generosity in wanting to raise public awareness of the importance of CARE Act programs,” said Dr. Gene Copello, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. “As the largest discretionary domestic HIV/AIDS care and treatment program serving over half a million people with over \$2 billion annually in federal funds, the Ryan White CARE Act is a fundamental component of our nation’s commitment to providing lifesaving treatment for those living with HIV/AIDS. This media and information campaign will remind America just how important the care and treatment provided by our government through the CARE Act is for the most vulnerable people in communities across the nation.”

“It is time to shine the spotlight once again on the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic, which is expanding to new communities and new regions across the U.S., with an estimated 40,000 new infections occurring each year,” commented Christine Lubinski, Executive Director of the HIV Medicine Association. “With as many as 1.1 million people in the U.S. living today with HIV/AIDS, and nearly 3 out of 4 of them uninsured or relying on public assistance, the CARE Act for them is a matter of life or death. This media campaign will remind Americans that HIV/AIDS exists in everyone’s neighborhood and that despite the success of the Ryan White program, not all Americans have access to lifesaving care and treatment.”

“Through this national media campaign, we will show the diverse faces of AIDS and tell the real stories of the struggles of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, whether it is in our largest cities or in rural America” said Julie Scofield, Executive Director of the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors. “We will also highlight the success of the CARE Act in not only providing lifesaving drugs, which are keeping people alive longer than ever before, but the full range of medical care and support services that the CARE Act provides to those living with HIV/AIDS.”

“The Gill Foundation and its partners will enhance the AIDS community’s efforts in raising awareness through the media about the success of this 15 year old program and the need for its continuation,” said Dr. Howard Grossman, Executive Director of the American Academy of HIV Medicine. “Our effort will, of course, involve the national media, but our real goal is to focus attention on local markets outside of Washington, to remind people about the success of the Ryan White CARE Act and the desperate need for its continuation.”

The media campaign will begin immediately and run until Congress has renewed the Ryan White CARE Act for another five years.

About the Ryan White ACTION Campaign (www.ryanwhiteaction.org)

The Ryan White ACTION Campaign is a national campaign designed to raise awareness about the importance of the Ryan White CARE Act, set to expire September 30th, and why it needs to be reauthorized and adequately funded. Launched by a coalition of medical providers and HIV/AIDS advocacy organizations, including The AIDS Institute, American Academy of HIV Medicine, HIV Medicine Association, and National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors, the campaign includes the involvement of a number of prominent advocates on HIV/AIDS, including Jeanne White-Ginder and former Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher.