



Washington, DC
November 30, 2016

**Statement on the Nomination of Tom Price for
Secretary of Health & Human Services**

We, the CAEAR Coalition, HIV advocates that represent the millions of Americans living with and affected by HIV/AIDS in counties, cities, suburbs, towns and villages across this country, and the volunteers and workers who provide essential prevention, care and treatment in hospitals, community health centers and AIDS service organizations, are deeply concerned by the nomination of Tom Price for Secretary of Health and Human Services.

We believe his nomination amplifies the incoming administration's commitment to dismantle and replace the Affordable Care Act, revoke Medicaid expansion and convert Medicaid into block grants to states, and to turn Medicare from a "defined benefit" to a "defined contribution."

The Secretary of HHS oversees a sprawling department with a \$1 trillion dollar budget. *The Washington Post* notes that HHS "Medicare and Medicaid programs affect more than 100 million Americans young and old. It regulates the nation's food and drugs. Through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it runs public health programs that reach into every state and around the world. It is an engine of biomedical research through the National Institutes of Health."

HHS also oversees the Health Resources Services Administration/Bureau of HIV/AIDS, home to the Ryan White CARE Act that provides HIV care and treatment to hundreds of thousands of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Many in the HIV community and the broader health care community have been disturbed by the campaign rhetoric of the president-elect on issues crucial to our survival. We fear that after eight years of expanding health care coverage to millions of

men, women and children -- Republicans and Democrats alike -- that those gains will be diminished.

What will a new HHS agenda mean for people living with HIV/AIDS? In an interview with PBS Newshour, Matt Kavanaugh of Global Health Access Project, put it succinctly “a shift in Medicaid to block grants could spell cuts in HIV programs – something seen in the 1990s.” He observed that “one of the most important things that happened with Medicaid expansion was that people living with HIV were able to move off of state AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAP) and, not just get HIV drugs, but full [health] insurance. If the ACA is rolled back, it is likely we will see huge problems with ADAP.”

It has been 22 days since Donald J. Trump was elected the 45th President of the United States. In 50 days he will begin his four-year term of office. Since his election he has appointed 12 members of his cabinet, with an additional 10 appointments waiting in the wings. Within a matter of months, decisions made by each of these individuals will touch our lives and the lives of someone we know.

Should Dr. Price be confirmed, the CAEAR Coalition stands ready to work with him, advocating on behalf of all Americans living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. As we have with each new administration and Congress, we will educate our membership about the changing political landscape, new and revised policies, legislation and financing that affect federal HIV programs through quarterly face-to-face meetings, monthly policy briefing calls, an enhanced social media presence, a revamped website and redoubled efforts to communicate and organize Ryan White Part A, Part C and AIDS Education and Training Centers grantees and Planning Councils/Planning Bodies.

In the challenging times ahead, the CAEAR Coalition will continue to speak out and join forces with others in common cause. We owe it to those we've lost to HIV/AIDS, whether we knew their names or not, to keep fighting for the end to AIDS.

The CAEAR Coalition is the oldest national HIV/AIDS organization representing the interests of people living with HIV/AIDS, community-based service providers, and the public health grantees of the Ryan White Care Act. CAEAR targets its advocacy on behalf of the Part A eligible metropolitan areas and the community health centers directly funded through Ryan White Part C.