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**Statement of Matthew Lesieur, Vice-Chair, CAEAR Coalition on the
Unveiling of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy**

July 13, 2010

CAEAR Coalition applauds the Obama Administration for developing the first comprehensive National HIV/AIDS Strategy aimed at combating the HIV epidemic in the United States and urges the commitment of federal resources to ensure successful and effective implementation of the plan.

The National HIV/AIDS Strategy goals are substantial, achievable and essential to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and to providing life saving treatments to those in need. The development of the strategy represents a significant step forward in the coordination of HIV/AIDS programs across the federal government. The plan's success will depend on adequate resources and continued cooperation and collaboration across agencies and departments.

The current crisis with the federal AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) – with more than 2,200 people on waiting lists for HIV drugs – highlights the need to support public health strategies with the resources necessary to implement them. The federal government's drive to help people learn their HIV status and connect them to care is laudable. Our members have been actively engaged in those efforts, and are eager to plan for and implement scaled-up initiatives that will link the newly diagnosed to necessary and appropriate medical care and support services.

CAEAR Coalition will continue to review the strategy's details and identify opportunities for health care and community providers to work with the Administration and Congress to ensure that the strategy moves from paper to reality. Implementation of National HIV/AIDS Strategy goals in tandem with health care reform will result in achieving our shared goals of reducing new HIV infections, increasing access to care, reducing health disparities and alleviating stigma. As the nation's health care system evolves, it is crucial that the full range of Ryan White Program services continue to meet the diverse and complex needs of people living with HIV.

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