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CAEAR Coalition Supports Speaker Nancy Pelosi—Congress’s Greatest HIV/AIDS Champion—and Full Funding of ADAP without Restrictions, While Denouncing Funeral March Targeting Speaker’s Home

August 4, 2010

“At a time of crisis, the worst thing the AIDS community could do is attack its greatest champion in Congress, Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Her commitment to people living with and at risk for HIV infection is unassailable,” said Ernest Hopkins, Chair of the Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition. “Since her first days in Congress and throughout her congressional career, she has been a leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS and CAEAR denounces any suggestions to the contrary.” The Los Angeles-based AIDS Healthcare Foundation is planning a mock wake and funeral procession to the Speaker’s residence on Wednesday, August 4.

CAEAR Coalition also calls on Congress, the Obama Administration, state governments and the pharmaceutical industry to resolve the current fiscal crisis hitting AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs)—resulting in over 2,300 people on waiting lists for medications in 13 states, and other states implementing various cost containment measures further reducing treatment access to thousands of other individuals.

ADAP, a state-based component of the Ryan White CARE Act, provides HIV medications to low-income, uninsured, and underinsured people living with HIV/AIDS. The need for lifesaving medications has outstripped the mix of federal and state money that funds ADAPs nationally in part due to successful public policy initiatives, medical care and research. Demand continues to grow as more people are living with HIV than ever before as a result of the lifesaving medications, public health guidelines recommend HIV treatment at an earlier stage of disease, and routine HIV testing is identifying alarming numbers of people living with HIV who did not know they were infected.

CAEAR Coalition urges all parties to support an emergency FY 2010 supplemental appropriation of \$126 million for ADAP and an FY 2011 ADAP appropriation of \$1.205 billion. These measures are essential to reducing and preventing waiting lists, formulary reductions and other cost containment measures and to allowing all state ADAPs to provide the full range of antiviral medications and treatments for infections and side effects.

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The Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition is a national membership organization which advocates for federal appropriations, legislation, policy and regulations to meet the care, treatment, support service and prevention needs of people living with HIV/AIDS and the organizations that serve them. More information at www.caear.org.