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Contacts:

Damon A. Dozier
National Minority AIDS
Council
Office: (202) 483-6622
Mobile: (301) 461-6516
ddozier@nmac.org

Diana Bruce
AIDS Alliance for Children,
Youth & Families
Office: (202) 785-3564 x25
Mobile: (202) 492-7804
dbruce@aids-alliance.org

Robert Cordero
CAEAR Coalition
Office: (202) 408-0305
Mobile: (202) 409-9786
cordero@housingworks.org

AIDS Organizations Salute Congressional Black Caucus Session on Ryan White CARE Act
Members Deliver Floor Speeches on Need for Reauthorization of HIV/AIDS Statute

Washington, DC – September 28, 2005 – The National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth and Families (AIDS Alliance) and the Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition thank the members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) who delivered, in a series of speeches on the floor of the House of Representatives today, the urgent need to reauthorize the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act. The CARE Act, scheduled to expire this Friday, September 30, provides desperately needed care, treatment and support services to over 577,000 people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS nationwide.

The domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic has had a dramatic impact on communities of color since the beginning. Although racial and ethnic minorities comprise only a small percentage of the total population, they account for a disproportionate number of people living with HIV/AIDS. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 50 percent of people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States are African American.

“The AIDS epidemic continues to devastate communities of color nationwide,” Paul Kawata, Executive Director of the National Minority AIDS Council announced this afternoon. “It is a moral and social imperative that the CARE Act is reauthorized and fully funded so communities of color nationwide have the resources necessary to combat this disease.”

Earlier this year in his State of the Union Address, President Bush announced his commitment to the reauthorization of the CARE Act, stating that efforts under the law should be focused on

African-American men and women. According to the Health Resources and Services Administration, almost half (46 percent) of all Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act clients were African American. In addition to suffering disproportionately from AIDS, African-American women are also disproportionately infected with HIV. It is estimated that African-American women account for 64 percent of all new HIV infections among women. African-American children represent almost two-thirds of all reported pediatric AIDS cases.

"African American women and families living with HIV rely on Title IV of the CARE Act to keep them healthy and their babies HIV-negative," said Ivy Turnbull, president of AIDS Alliance. "It is sound public policy to support HIV-affected families by reauthorizing the CARE Act," continued Turnbull, who also is executive director of the Brooklyn Alliance for Family Education Care & Treatment (AFFECT) -- a CARE Act funded program. People of color make up 88 percent of Title IV clients.

Representatives Donna Christian-Christensen (D-VI), Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-CA), G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), Maxine Waters (D-CA), Eleanor Holmes-Norton (D-DC) and other Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) members participated in the special order speeches delivered on the House floor earlier this evening. The Members were united in their call for additional funding, expanded supportive services, and increased capacity-building resources for communities of color to respond appropriately and swiftly to the epidemic.

Patricia Bass, Chair of the Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition stated, "As an African American woman whose community has been devastated by HIV/AIDS, I commend the Congressional Black Caucus for bringing attention to the impending expiration of the Ryan White CARE Act of 2000 on September 30th. It is appropriate for the CBC to ask congressional leadership to exert the political will to address the U.S. AIDS epidemic, which disproportionately impacts communities of color."

About National Minority AIDS Council

The National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC) was founded in 1987 to develop leadership within communities of color to address challenges of HIV/AIDS. NMAC has responded to the needs of communities of color by developing programs aimed at enhancing the skills necessary to confront this health crisis, including a public policy education program, national and regional training conferences, a treatment and research program and numerous publications. Today, NMAC is an association of AIDS service organizations providing valuable information to community-based organizations, hospitals, clinics and other groups assisting individuals and families affected by the AIDS epidemic. NMAC's advocacy efforts funded through private funders and donors only. www.nmac.org

About AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth and Families

AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families is a national training, education and advocacy organization. Our provider members include over 650 community-based organizations that serve over 53,000 pregnant women, children, youth and families affected by HIV/AIDS. Many of our programs are funded under Title IV of the Ryan White CARE Act, a program that reaches the

vast majority of pregnant women and newborns affected by HIV/AIDS in the United States. Title IV provides comprehensive, family-centered care to women, children, youth and male caregivers affected by HIV/AIDS through 91 grants in 35 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. www.aids-alliance.org

About Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition

Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition represents more than 400 grantees under Titles I and III of the Ryan White Care Act, including the 51 major metropolitan areas most adversely affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, as well as providers and consumers of CARE-Act funded HIV/AIDS services. The CAEAR Coalition also advocates for adequate funding for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) in Title II of the CARE Act. www.caear.org

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