

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 4, 2004

The Honorable Tommy G. Thompson  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On February 5, we wrote you about the urgent need for additional federal funding for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), which provides essential HIV/AIDS medications to Americans without adequate health insurance. We have yet to receive a response from you. We write again today to emphasize the urgency of this issue. Since we last wrote, the number of Americans waiting for life-saving HIV/AIDS treatment has increased by 50%.

In the February 5 letter, we described a growing gap between public health needs and the President's budget for the Ryan White CARE Act. CDC is promoting HIV testing in the hopes of diagnosing Americans who are currently unaware they are infected. This campaign will create new demand for HIV treatments and medical care. But the President's fiscal year 2005 budget asks for insufficient HIV/AIDS funding, including less than one-sixth of the increase needed to ensure that all HIV-positive Americans have access to essential therapies.

At the time of our letter, the most recent data indicated that there were about 800 people waiting to be enrolled in drug assistance programs and 15 states with waiting lists or other cost-containment strategies that limit access.<sup>1</sup> We have now become aware that the situation is deteriorating further. The most recent data indicate that there are 1,263 individuals on ADAP waiting lists, and 17 states with current or pending additional cost-containment strategies.<sup>2</sup>

Given state budget trends and CDC's efforts to identify individuals infected with HIV, this gap in access to care is not going to improve on its own. Significant new funding for Ryan

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<sup>1</sup>National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors, *ADAP Watch* (Jan. 22, 2004) (online at [www.nastad.org](http://www.nastad.org)).

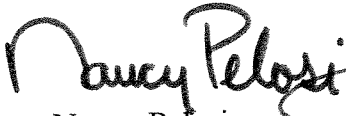
<sup>2</sup>National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors, *ADAP Watch* (Apr. 8, 2004) (online at [www.nastad.org](http://www.nastad.org)).

The Honorable Tommy G. Thompson

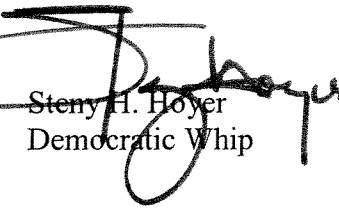
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White Care Act programs is essential. We urge you to pay attention to this growing crisis and propose a strategy to address it.

Sincerely,



Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader



Steny H. Hoyer  
Democratic Whip



Henry A. Waxman  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Government  
Reform



Barney Frank  
Member of Congress



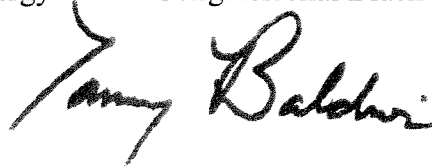
Sherrod Brown  
Ranking Minority Member  
Subcommittee on Health  
Committee on Energy  
and Commerce



Donna M. Christensen  
Chair  
Health Brain Trust  
Congressional Black Caucus



Barbara Lee  
Chair  
Task Force on Global HIV/AIDS  
Congressional Black Caucus



Tammy Baldwin  
Member of Congress