

HIV Health Care Access Working Group

September 19, 2014

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Hatch:

We are writing on behalf of the HIV Health Care Access Working Group (HHCAWG) to **offer our strong endorsement of the “Ensuring Access to Primary Care for Women & Children Act” (S. 2694)** introduced by Senators Murray, Brown, Landrieu and Rockefeller. HHCAWG is a coalition of more than 100 national and community-based organizations representing people living with HIV, HIV medical providers, public health professionals, and advocates who are committed to ensuring access to vital HIV-related prevention, care, and treatment services.

The extension of the policy that ensures that Medicaid reimbursement for primary care services is on par with reimbursement for comparable services under Medicare is critical to people with HIV. The expansion of eligible providers to include Obstetricians/Gynecologists, Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants also is important to people with HIV who often rely on these providers for their care. We urge the Committee to make advancing this measure a high priority.

Prior to the implementation of the Medicaid expansion in many states this year, Medicaid was estimated to cover nearly half of people with HIV in the U.S. in regular care. This percentage has likely increased dramatically and will continue to do so as more states participate in the Medicaid expansion. While Medicaid is an important program for people with HIV, the program’s historically low reimbursement rates (on average 66% of Medicare rates before the enhanced payment provision) create significant access barriers in some states.

HIV clinics will face serious challenges sustaining their services if the enhanced Medicaid reimbursement for primary care services is not continued in 2015 and beyond. Please make it a top priority to pass this bill and to develop a long-term solution for ensuring equitable provider reimbursement levels under the Medicaid program.

Please contact the HIV Health Care Access Working Group co-chairs, Andrea Weddle with the HIV Medicine Association (aweddle@hivma.org), Robert Greenwald with the Treatment Access Expansion

Project (rgreenwa@law.harvard.edu) or Amy Killelea with the National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors (akillelea@nastad.org) with questions regarding our support of this important legislation.

Submitted on behalf of the HIV Health Care Access Working Group Steering Committee,

AIDS Action Baltimore | AIDS Action Committee of MA | AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families | AIDS Foundation of Chicago | The AIDS Institute | AIDS Project Los Angeles | AIDS Treatment Data Network | AIDS United | American Academy of HIV Medicine | Association of Nurses in AIDS Care | Community Access National Network | Communities Advocating Emergency AIDS Relief (CAEAR) Coalition | Gay Men's Health Crisis | Georgia AIDS Coalition | Harlem United | Health and Disability Advocates | HealthHIV | HIVictorious, Inc. | HIV Medicine Association | HIV Prevention Justice Alliance | Housing Works | L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center | Moveable Feast | National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors | National Minority AIDS Council | The National Working Positive Coalition | Project Inform | San Francisco AIDS Foundation | South Carolina Campaign to End AIDS | Treatment Access Expansion Project | Treatment Action Group | VillageCare

cc: The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Sherrod Brown
The Honorable Mary Landrieu
The Honorable John Rockefeller