



HRSA/HAB request for comments re: Reauthorization Ryan White Care Act
July 2012

AIDS Alliance urges HRSA to maintain its commitment to serving the unique programmatic needs of women, children, youth, and families, and together with The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation we have developed recommendations that are described in the attached letter. In summary they are:

- Prioritize women and family-centered care in the Ryan White Program throughout the U.S.
- Continue and expand resources for comprehensive support services for women living with HIV.
- Maintain efforts to prevent perinatal transmission of HIV.
- Maintain, protect, and expand youth-serving programs under the Ryan White CARE Act.
- Protect transitions of care for youth living with HIV/AIDS.
- Maintain programs that support pediatric medical and support services for HIV infected children.
- Collaborate among HHS agencies on development of key data related to women, children and families living with HIV.

AIDS Alliance feels strongly that the overwhelming combination of poverty, family responsibilities, and mental health issues including past abuse and domestic violence, and other causative factors raises substantial barriers to effective and sustained treatment for many women living with HIV. The relationship between domestic violence and HIV is being integrated into programs. Research and anecdotal reports by providers indicate that at least half of all women living with HIV admit to a history of sexual abuse and it is estimated that over half of HIV-positive women have at least one mental health condition; rates of post-traumatic stress disorder reaches 35 percent in some estimates.¹ There is compelling research on the positive impact of supportive services for women living with HIV.² However, even with Medicaid, Ryan White resources will be needed for these services, for both insured and uninsured women.

Ryan White programs will also need to continue to play a vital role for HIV-infected youth, regardless of how they were infected, by supporting youth-friendly and, in particular, young LGBT-friendly HIV programs separate from those that serve adult women and men. Historically, effective Ryan White Part D programs led on these issues and even with the promise of the ACA, the complex needs of persons living with HIV and the potential for state disparities necessitates a strong overall Ryan White Program.

¹ Gail E. Wyatt et al., "The Efficacy of an integrated Risk Reduction Intervention for HIV-Positive Women with Childhood sexual abuse histories" *AIDS and Behavior* Volume 8.4, page 454, 2004

² HIV Law Project "Investing In Health: Supportive Services for Women Living with HIV", July 2012

<http://www.hivlawproject.org/resources/cwha/Investing%20in%20Health%20Supportive%20Services%20for%20Women%20Living%20with%20HIV.pdf>