ROLL CALL

National HIV/Hepatitis C Co-Infection Coalition

Dear Members of Congress:

At least four million Americans have been infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV) and thousands more are infected each year. The hepatitis C virus (HCV) increasingly affects vulnerable populations across the United States.

In particular, the hepatitis C virus is prevalent among HIV-positive persons, co-infecting nearly 30%. HIV accelerates HCV disease progression and as a result HCV-related end-stage liver disease has become a leading cause of death for people living with HIV. Among people of color HCV and HIV are more prevalent.

Access to HCV treatment for HIV-positive individuals has been severely limited. Only seven ADAPs (AIDS Drug Assistance Programs) have been able to include HCV treatment in their formularies. Funding for ADAPs must be increased so that they are able to provide treatment for HIV and HCV to all who require it. HCV diagnostic testing is not universally covered by ADAPs or Medicaid. Funding must be made available to assure that all HIV-positive individuals have access to HCV testing, counseling and prevention (which has been recommended by the CDC).

This reality led individuals from advocacy, social service and substance abuse organizations to establish the National HIV/HCV Co-Infection Coalition.

We implore you to add HIV/HCV co-infection to your national healthcare agenda and respectfully request a hearing in the House and the Senate about HIV/HCV co-infection. Our Coalition is committed to working collaboratively with Congress and the federal government. We urge our representatives in Congress to:

1) Support full funding of AIDS Drug Assistance Programs,

2) Support the Hepatitis C Epidemic Control and Prevention Act, which is cosponsored by Senators Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA) in the Senate, and Representatives Heather Wilson (R-NM) and Edolphus Towns (D-NY) in the House of Representatives,

3) Support Ryan White re-authorization.

Sincerely,
National HIV/Hepatitis C Co-Infection Coalition

For more information call 888-26NATAP or 212-219-0106
Or visit our website at http://www.HepCAdvocacy.org

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