

Health Care Reform Priorities for Women Living with HIV/AIDS

1. Prohibit private and public health insurance exclusions and ratings based on pre-existing health conditions, gender, and age.
2. Include a strong public option in any health care reform bill.
3. Improve and expand Medicaid & Medicare Services for women living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.
4. Uphold women's access to a full range of sexual and reproductive health services and prevention in both private and public health care options.
5. Extend and fully fund the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act as requested in the Ryan White community consensus document.

Background:

- ✓ Women in the U.S. are increasingly affected by HIV, especially women of color and women living in poverty.
 - Women accounted for more than 25% of HIV diagnoses in 2007.
 - Black and Latina women are disproportionately affected by the epidemic, comprising 80% of new female AIDS diagnoses.
 - Women affected by HIV disproportionately live in poverty, care for children and families, and lack access to quality health care that adequately meets their needs.
- ✓ Only 17% of people with HIV have private health insurance coverage, making effective and inclusive public health insurance programs critical.
 - Our public health care programs like Medicaid and Medicare provide crucial support to people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS but currently do not go far enough – for example, Medicaid coverage currently is dependent on whether people have an AIDS diagnosis or dependent children.
 - In regions like the U.S. South, where HIV/AIDS rates are on the rise, nearly 19% of people are uninsured leading up to 67% of women to forgo doctor visits due to costs.
 - 76% of Americans support a public insurance option, according to a recent poll.
- ✓ Rising HIV/AIDS rates and prohibitive health care costs go hand in hand. For that reason, any healthcare reform must expand our public health safety nets like Medicare and Medicaid to provide consistent and quality health care services to all who need care.
- ✓ Reform must also remove discriminatory and financial barriers to public and private insurance.