

PRESIDENT SIGNS RYAN WHITE CARE ACT INTO LAW

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PRESIDENT SIGNS RYAN WHITE CARE ACT INTO LAW WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today applauded the reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act, which President Clinton signed into law this morning. Larson is a co-sponsor of the Act, HR 4807, which reauthorizes the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act of 1990. The Act is named for the Indiana teenager who was infected with the illness after a blood transfusion and died shortly before the Act was originally passed. It authorizes more than \$1 billion dollars for AIDS treatment and support programs for fiscal year 2001. In fiscal year 2000, Hartford received \$4.5 million dollars under Title I funding. The House agreed to the reauthorization by a vote of 411-0 on October 5.

"I am very pleased that we've seen an increase in funding for the Ryan White CARE Act to help care for those who are living with this horrible disease, and their families, who simply don't have the resources to adequately care for themselves and their loved ones," said Larson. "It is my hope that this Act, as it has since 1990, will offer critical support to all those who are effected by HIV/AIDS. The reauthorized Act makes an effort to specifically address those groups of Americans that have a "severe need" for assistance, with emphasis on education and prevention as well as treatment."

The reauthorized Act also seeks to address the issue of funding based on HIV status in addition to the number of individuals with AIDS. The law orders the Secretary of Health and Human Services to determine no later than fiscal year 2004 the accuracy of the data on HIV cases. If the data is accurate, the result would be funding under Title I based on the number of both HIV and AIDS cases.

Provisions of the Act include Title I emergency relief grants to cities for health and support services for low-income and under- or uninsured persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families. Support services under Title I include medical and dental care, prescription drugs, transportation, counseling, and home and hospice care. There was a 40 million dollar increase in Title I funding, and Hartford is one of 51 Eligible Metropolitan areas (EMAs) that can apply for the available funds.

Title II of the act also provides grants to every state and territory in the United States to improve quality, accessibility and organization of health care and support services for those with HIV/AIDS. This includes, community-based care, assistance in continuing provide health insurance and treatments and drugs that prolong life and help prevent hospitalization. For fiscal year 2000, Connecticut received over 12 million dollars in grants in Title II funding.

Title III of the act provides grants for primary healthcare services for people living with AIDS and at risk populations, which include women, the homeless, and substance abusers. This action is taken in the hopes of providing early intervention through education, counseling testing and treatment.

Lastly, Title IV of the act provides grants for coordinated HIV services and access to research for children, youth, women and families.

With the President's signature, the life of the Ryan White CARE Act has been extended until 2005, when it comes up for reauthorization again.

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