



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI URGES SENATE APPROVAL OF RYAN WHITE CARE ACT;
CALLS ON OPPONENTS TO STOP PLAYING ‘NUMBERS GAME’***

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today said the Senate must approve a bipartisan, bicameral reauthorization of the “Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resource Emergency Act” (RWCA) already cleared by key lawmakers in the House, but Senators from three states are blocking a vote that would speed reauthorization programs providing life sparing treatment of individuals suffering from HIV and AIDS.

“The HIV/AIDS epidemic of today affects more women, more minorities, and more people in rural areas and the South than ever before,” Enzi said. “While we have made significant progress in understanding and treating this disease, there is still much more to do to ensure equitable treatment for all Americans infected with HIV and AIDS. We must ensure that those infected with HIV and living with AIDS will receive our support and our compassion, regardless of their race, their gender, or where they live.”

“An agreement must be reached,” Enzi added. “If the bill is not reauthorized by September 30, several states including California, Massachusetts, Maryland, Illinois, and the District of Columbia would receive drastic reductions in funding and the program that people infected with HIV and AIDS rely on for drugs and other services will not be able to provide them with the treatment they desperately need. I urge the Senators who are holding up this bill to stop playing the ‘numbers game,’ so that Ryan White CARE Act funding can address the epidemic of today, not yesterday.”

The New York delegation, for example, argues that changing the formulas would devastate their state’s treatment infrastructure. A closer look, however, reveals that the impact on New York, like other states with large urban areas, would not be so great:

- In 2006 the national average funding per AIDS case was \$1,613. New York’s average was \$2,122 per case – nearly 33 percent more per case than the national average.

- Under the corrected funding formulas, the national average in 2007 would be \$1,793, and New York's would still be a significantly higher \$2,107 – just 5 percent less than the state currently receives.
- In 2000-2003, New York carried over an average of \$29 million a year in Title I and Title II funds. If New York can afford to carry a surplus of \$29 million in those years, how can it justify holding up life-saving legislation over a \$2.1 million per year funding adjustment?

The bill revises flawed funding formulas, which currently favor states with urban areas and a longer history of AIDS infections over states where the disease is now spreading most rampantly, to ensure more equitable treatment opportunities for all persons with HIV/AIDS. It better targets funding so that infected persons have better access to high quality health care, improves accountability for health outcomes, and will save lives through treatment.

The bill, as approved, is supported by Enzi and the HELP Committee's Ranking Member, Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA).

The Ryan White CARE Act was initiated in 1990 to provide treatment and care for individuals suffering from HIV/AIDS who are in the greatest need of assistance. The legislation must be reauthorized every five years.

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