

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

**ACTION REFERRAL**

TO <i>Supra</i>	DATE <i>2-20-13</i>
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DIRECTOR'S USE ONLY	ACTION REQUESTED
1. LOG NUMBER <i>000259</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for the Director's signature DATE DUE _____
2. DATE SIGNED BY DIRECTOR <i>CC: Mr. Keck</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for appropriate signature DATE DUE _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> FOIA DATE DUE _____
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Necessary Action

APPROVALS (Only when prepared for director's signature)	APPROVE	* DISAPPROVE (Note reason for disapproval and return to preparer.)	COMMENT
1.			
2.			
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FEB 19 2013

Department of Health & Human Services  
**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**

February 13, 2013

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley  
Governor of South Carolina  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Governor Haley,

We are writing on behalf of the Southern AIDS Coalition (SAC), a regional non-profit comprised of community-based organizations, state HIV/AIDS directors, advocates, people living with HIV, and business entities working together to serve people living with or at risk for HIV/AIDS in the South. We urge you to ensure that the Affordable Care Act is implemented fully in a way that provides adequate coverage for people living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic conditions.

In South Carolina alone, an estimated 15,000 people are living with HIV. Without adequate insurance these individuals are less likely to have the resources to receive the care and treatment they need to suppress the virus and, subsequently, to prevent the transmission of the virus to others. Further, they are more likely to die of AIDS. In fact, lack of insurance and other obstacles to treatment and care in South Carolina contribute to the nation's seventh highest death rate among those living with HIV/AIDS – nearly double the rates of many Northeastern, Midwestern, and Pacific states.<sup>1</sup>

In 2014, thousands of people living with HIV/AIDS will have access to insurance, many for the first time. But to be meaningful, insurance coverage must include the comprehensive services that people living with HIV/AIDS need to stay healthy. Services that play a vital role in effective management of HIV disease include comprehensive prescription drug coverage, preventive services such as routine HIV testing, routine access to medical providers and appropriate laboratory testing, chronic disease management services, and mental health and substance abuse services. Such services are necessary to ensure that people living with HIV/AIDS are diagnosed early, stay in regular care and treatment, and realize the lifesaving benefits of HIV treatment. Further, because we now know early and consistent access to HIV treatment prevents the likelihood of a person transmitting the disease by 96%, comprehensive care for people living with HIV/AIDS is not only important

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<sup>1</sup> Hanna, David, et al., "Disparities among States in HIV-related Mortality in Persons with HIV Infection, 37 U.S. States (2001-2007)," *AIDS*. (2011).

Southern AIDS Coalition, Inc.  
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(205) 918-8230

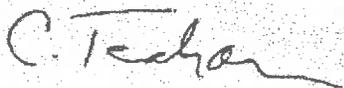
to public health, but saves a considerable amount of money as each transmission averted results in lifetime cost savings of over \$600,000 per case.<sup>2</sup>

Governor Haley, as you and the South Carolina state legislature will make crucial health care decisions in the coming months, we ask that you please include representation from the HIV community and other chronic disease groups in implementation dialogues. With the unique needs of HIV-positive residents, decisions regarding Medicaid Expansion, the Essential Health Benefits Package, and the South Carolina Insurance Exchange will be vitally important. To include a representative of the HIV community in health reform planning, we would like to offer the following contact:

Johanna Haynes, LISW AP/CP  
Chair, Southern Carolina HIV/AIDS Crisis Task Force  
3650 Clay Pond Road  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29579  
Phone: (843) 236-9000  
Email: [jhaynes@careteamsc.org](mailto:jhaynes@careteamsc.org)

Health Reform implementation has the potential to save lives and money in the state of South Carolina. We ask that you and the South Carolina state legislature act quickly and effectively to extend life-saving coverage to thousands of South Carolinians living with HIV, those at risk, and everyone struggling to afford care.

Respectfully,



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Cathalene Teahan, RN, MSN, CNS  
Chair, Southern AIDS Coalition

CC: Tony Keck, *Director*, State of South Carolina, Department of Health & Human Services

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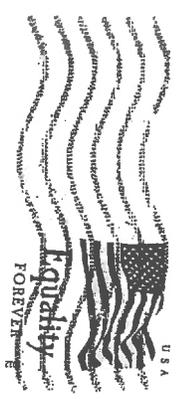
<sup>2</sup> AIDS United. "Medicaid Expansion Will Help Turn the Tide of HIV/AIDS in the U.S." August 2012. Print. Accessed January 2013. <[www.hivhealthreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Medicaid-Expansion-Fact-Sheet\\_FINAL-2.pdf](http://www.hivhealthreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Medicaid-Expansion-Fact-Sheet_FINAL-2.pdf)>.

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**Tony Keck**

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