



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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**THE AIDS INSTITUTE SENDS LETTER TO SECRETARY CLINTON IN
RESPONSE TO HEPATITIS C TREATMENT COMMENTS**
Urges Her to Prioritize Elimination of Hepatitis C, if Elected President

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In response to recent [comments](#) Democratic presidential nominee and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made regarding hepatitis C (HCV) and the pricing of new curative drugs, The AIDS Institute sent a [letter](#) yesterday urging her to prioritize elimination of hepatitis C as a public health threat should she be elected president.

In the letter, The AIDS Institute wrote, "The next administration must make it a priority to eliminate HCV as a public health threat in the United States. The 3.5 million Americans living with HCV are looking forward to the day that once diagnosed, they can be linked to care and treatment, and be cured of their virus."

The AIDS Institute wrote, "The issue of drug pricing is extremely complex and cannot be told easily in sound bites. While headlines may continue to claim that HCV curative drugs cost \$1,000 a pill or \$84,000 for the entire multi-week treatment regimen, that was the initial list price and never the actual price paid by Medicaid, Medicare, or private insurers." In the letter, The AIDS Institute explained that each of these payers receives significant rebates and discounts, and due to the approval of additional drugs on the market, the prices have been driven down even lower for these very cost-effective medications.

The greatest concerns for patients at this time are the barriers several payers have discriminatorily enacted that prohibit patients from accessing curative treatments. The letter laid out some of these barriers, including several state Medicaid programs that illegally restrict access by allowing only patients with severe liver disease or who pass sobriety tests to receive curative treatments. The letter also asked the secretary, if she were to be elected president, to "continue to enforce the Medicaid statute and ensure that states are complying with the law."

The AIDS Institute also expressed its concern with the access restrictions

several private insurance companies are instituting that prevent beneficiaries from accessing curative medications due to high cost-sharing, including co-insurance as high as 50 percent. The AIDS Institute applauded the secretary's proposal to limit patient co-pays and stated, "we look forward to working with you to ensure the ACA patient protections and nondiscrimination provisions are enforced, if you are elected president."

Finally, The AIDS Institute asked Secretary Clinton to commit to ensuring that there are necessary resources to eliminate hepatitis C as a public health threat. Specifically, the letter asked her to implement the Obama Administration's soon to be released *Updated National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan* and to dramatically increase in her first proposed budget, funding for CDC's Division of Viral Hepatitis to scale up testing, surveillance and education programs.

In order to further discuss the importance of combatting HCV, The AIDS Institute requested to meet with representatives of Secretary Clinton's campaign.

To read the full letter click [here](#).

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