

NEWS

...from the Illinois House of Representatives

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Governor Signs Feigenholtz Legislation to Help Low-Income Individuals Afford HIV Treatment

For more than a decade Illinois' AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) has helped HIV-positive individuals afford life-sustaining medication. Because of diminishing Federal resources, Illinois ADAP was facing a budget shortfall caused by rising enrollment, increasing drug costs and extended patient longevity.

"ADAP has been very effective in making prescription drugs affordable for individuals affected with HIV and AIDS. H.B. 4302 will shift many of the financial burdens to the federal government so that ADAP can continue being a source of assistance and hope to those who need it most," Representative Sara Feigenholtz said.

Under the new measure, the State can transfer the majority of prescription drug costs to the federal government's Medicare program. Those who are eligible for ADAP and Medicare but can't afford out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs will receive help from the Illinois Cares Rx Program, which will offset or cover those fees. This move will reduce fiscal pressure on ADAP and keep the program solvent for HIV-positive individuals in need of assistance.

This shift to different sources of funding underscores Illinois' commitment to providing HIV/AIDS medications at no cost to low-income residents. Spearheaded by Rep. Feigenholtz and sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Carol Ronen, H.B. 4302 passed both chambers unanimously and was signed by the Governor today.

"The coordination of ADAP and Medicare is a first step in trying to manage the increased utilization in the ADAP program. Our ability to transfer some of our ADAP clients over to Medicare and continue to provide wrap-around services to them will ultimately result in a win-win situation for HIV positives living in Illinois" Feigenholtz added. We want this process to be seamless for the client...that is key".

"This bill is a fantastic bargain for Illinois," said Mark Ishaug, executive director of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. This law cuts the cost of buying medication for people with HIV by almost two-thirds," Ishaug added.

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