

## State Rep Sara Feigenholtz Takes Aim at Looming Financial Crisis in Illinois AIDS Drug Assistance Program



State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz

**(Chicago, IL) — January 25, 2010.** State Rep. **Sara Feigenholtz** (D-Chicago), Chair of the Human Services Appropriations Committee, on Friday convened the committee at a public hearing to tackle the looming financial crisis in the [Illinois AIDS Drug Assistance Program](#) (ADAP) and HIV prevention programs.

The state AIDS drug program, which currently [enrolls 3,000 people](#), is under siege from unprecedented demand due to Illinois' economic turbulence and spiraling unemployment which stands at 11.1% in the state.

Program demand is expected to grow by 15% in 2010 and will need an additional \$10 million to meet the growth, [according to the AIDS Foundation of Chicago](#).

“The AIDS Drug Assistance Program is a lifeline for over 3,000 low-income, uninsured people every month, but demand for the program is skyrocketing,” Feigenholtz said.

“The need to maintain ADAP has forced the state to cut back on funding for HIV prevention services, which will only result in more HIV cases and more uninsured people who need ADAP. We need a balanced and sustainable solution to this public health emergency.”

[The Illinois Department of Public Health](#) estimates the ADAP clients use 8,500 prescriptions monthly.

One of those clients is **Matt Appleman** from Dixon, IL. Appleman turned to ADAP because health insurance companies refused to sell him insurance coverage due to his HIV status.

“My HIV medications cost over \$20,000 a year, but that’s what keeps me healthy and able to run my business,” said Appleman, who testified Friday.

“If I couldn’t get HIV medications through ADAP, I’d probably get so sick that I’d have to shut down my business and go on disability. I’d get HIV meds, but I’d have lost everything else.”

The state of Illinois faces nearly a \$13 billion budget deficit, the second largest in the nation, and has been reduced to paying its bills to vendors, on average, six months late.

The state does not have an extra \$10 million laying around. It’s broke.

Governor **Pat Quinn** has been urging—pleading—with the Illinois legislature to raise the state’s income tax to maintain the state’s vital program, such as ADAP. But his pleas have tumbled into a rabbit hole.

The Illinois General Assembly returns to “work” after the February 2 primary election. But informed observers expect lawmakers to punt on any income tax to avoid the wrath of surly voters in November.

Prognosis: not good.