



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Children's AIDS Fund Supports New CDC HIV Testing Guidelines**

The Children's AIDS Fund (CAF) welcomes the release of new HIV testing guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that encourage medical providers to make HIV testing a routine part of care in doctors' offices and clinics for all patients ages 13 to 64.

The CDC estimates that one quarter of the more than 1 million Americans thought to have HIV do not know they are infected and can unknowingly infect others. Routine HIV diagnosis will help identify those who do not seek testing because they do not perceive they are at risk. If positive, they can then be referred into care and treatment programs. Appropriate treatment, care and support will enable each individual to enjoy longer life, healthier outcomes, and hopefully not infect others.

CAF also calls upon Congress to reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act before October 1, and include the \$30 million "Early Diagnosis" grants to states that enact: (1) routine HIV testing of pregnant women and universal testing of newborn policies, and (2) routine HIV testing policies at STD clinics and substance abuse centers. This will augment the CDC's effort to quickly make this practice routine throughout the United States.

The recent "Get Screened for HIV" testing campaign in the District of Columbia shows how effective HIV testing programs can be. In just three months the program has found an infection rate of almost 3 percent among more than 7,000 people screened—more than double the national rate. Now identified, those individuals are able to access life-saving treatment and care and will be less likely to infect others.

A routine testing program in Dallas, Texas STD clinics increased the number of patients tested by more than 50 percent in one year alone. Routine testing legislation focused on pregnant women and infants in New York and Connecticut have proven effective in increased testing rates, effective patient referrals into care and treatment, and have virtually eliminated mother-to-child HIV transmission.

"The benefits of routine HIV diagnosis are enormous," said Dr. Fred Payne, CAF Medical Advisor. "If we are ever to get the U.S. HIV epidemic under control we must move to routine testing immediately."

Since its founding in 1987, CAF has promoted early diagnosis of HIV for the benefit of the patient through routine diagnosis programs. CAF is a non-profit organization working globally to limit the suffering of children and their families caused by HIV disease.

