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**EARLY TREATMENT FOR HIV ACT (ETHA)
FILED IN U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
U.S. AIDS Death Rate Could Be Reduced By 50 Percent**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Treatment Access Expansion Project (TAEP) and National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) announce the filing of the Early Treatment for HIV Act (ETHA) today in the U.S. House of Representatives. ETHA carries the broad, bi-partisan support of 42 original cosponsors comprised equally of Republicans and Democrats. Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Congressman Eliot Engel (D-NY) are the lead sponsors of ETHA.

ETHA gives states the option to provide Medicaid care to uninsured, poor and low-income people living with HIV before the disease progresses to AIDS. Currently, Medicaid eligibility rules require most people to become disabled by AIDS before they become eligible for the Medicaid-based care that could have prevented HIV disease from progressing to AIDS. Securing passage of ETHA is an important remedy to current Medicaid policy and creates significant health, economic, and public-health benefits.

- Early treatment **reduces AIDS-related deaths by 50 to 60 percent** and improves the health and quality of life of thousands of people living with HIV.
- Early treatment **lowers viral levels and the potential for HIV transmission by 60 percent.**
- Early access to care **reduces annual treatment costs**, high-cost medical interventions and reliance on government programs, and allows people with HIV to remain productive, working and paying taxes.

According to Robert Greenwald, Director of TAEP, “New HIV treatments have successfully improved both the health and quality of life for many people living with HIV and AIDS. However, without access to early intervention health care, these advances remain out of reach for thousands of poor and low-income, pre-disabled persons living with HIV.” He adds, “ETHA gives states the opportunity to bring their Medicaid eligibility rules in line with the federal government’s own guidelines on the standard of care for treating HIV disease.”

Frank Oldham, Jr., Executive Director of NAPWA said, “A sound domestic health policy on HIV/AIDS must ensure early access to care and treatment to all Americans. No one should die on a waiting list for access to treatment. ETHA will enable us to remove barriers to early-intervention health care and generate savings for our communities and our healthcare system. It’s the right and compassionate thing to do.”

ETHA is modeled after the highly successful Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention Treatment Act of 2000, which allows states to provide early access to treatment for Medicaid-eligible women with cancer.

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