



## **National Alliance for HIV Education and Workforce Development (NAHEWD) Funding Recommendation for the AIDS Education Training Centers (AETC)**

The National Alliance for HIV Education and Workforce Development (NAHEWD) is a membership organization of 8 regional and 2 national AIDS Education and Training Centers (AETCs). Established in 2010, NAHEWD supports the AETCs' mission to build the capacity of healthcare providers and teams so they are prepared and skilled to treat HIV and co-occurring conditions and scale up prevention, contributing to the effort to end the HIV epidemic. *Knowing the critical role AETCs play in ending the HIV epidemic, NAHEWD is advocating for the AETCs to be fully funded at \$58 million for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022.*

### *AIDS Education and Training Centers (AETCs)*

The Ryan White program, the nation's largest health care program for people with HIV, is composed of five "parts" (A-F), each with a different purpose and funded as a separate line item through annual appropriations. AETCs, funded through Part F, are the training and capacity building arm of Ryan White. AETCs, specifically:

- conduct targeted, multidisciplinary education and training programs and clinical consultation for health care providers treating people living with and at risk for HIV;
- build the capacity of clinics to provide biomedical prevention, testing and treatment for HIV and its comorbidities; and,
- develop the future workforce by working with health profession schools to integrate HIV and Interprofessional education into their curricula

The AETCs are the only national network of HIV clinical experts and educators providing locally-based, tailored education programs, consultation and technical assistance to healthcare teams and systems. With their national reach and local presence, the AETCs are agile and uniquely positioned to address the needs of providers, and the communities they serve, across the country in a rapid and efficient manner, as demonstrated by their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### *Funding Rationale*

- With early diagnosis, rapid and effective treatments, prevention of new transmissions, and rapid response to potential HIV outbreaks, the goal of ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic can truly become a reality.
- Due to clinical advances, *more* people living with HIV need care than ever before.
- Biomedical prevention, including PrEP and "Treatment as Prevention," has demonstrated extraordinary effectiveness, yet access and uptake fall far short of what is needed.
- With an aging HIV workforce, there is urgent need to replenish and increase the workforce capable of providing HIV biomedical prevention, diagnoses and care.
- AETCs have been flat funded 5 consecutive years – seriously inhibiting their ability to provide the clinical education, mentorship, and capacity building support that is critical to the HIV community.



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- The vast majority of the US is excluded from eligibility for Ending the HIV Epidemic resources. For AETCs to effectively meet the prevention and care training needs throughout the regions they serve, an increase in Part F funding is essential.

Increased funding would allow AETCs to:

- expand uptake of routine voluntary HIV testing;
- increase the implementation of biomedical prevention, specifically Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP);
- improve outcomes along the HIV care continuum, including engagement and retention in care, increasing the numbers of people who become virally suppressed;
- increase the number of health professionals willing and skilled to treat persons with and at risk of HIV;
- assure providers have access to cutting-edge information on rapidly changing developments in the field, such as new, long-acting injectable and implantable interventions for prevention and treatment;
- increase the capacity of providers to manage co-morbidities, such as hepatitis B and C, sexually transmitted diseases, substance use, and mental health disorders;
- expand availability of real time consultation on HIV and its co-morbid disorders;
- expand access to individualized capacity building assistance to federally qualified health centers and Ryan White clinics;
- expand training of the next generation of health care providers;
- assist providers with the challenges of providing care in the COVID pandemic era;
- disseminate best practices and strategies for addressing profound and troubling HIV-related health disparities, particularly for communities of color.

AIDS Education Training Centers are crucial first responders supporting those on the front lines of providing care and are vital to an effective response to the syndemics of HIV, Hepatitis, substance use, and now COVID.

Given the growing and critical role AETCs play in responding to emergent needs in the jurisdictions they serve, FY 2022 funding must be increased. Current AETC funding levels represent less than 2% of the total Ryan White Program funding.

**The National Alliance of HIV Education and Workforce Development requests Congressional appropriators provide \$58 million for the AETC Program in their Fiscal Year 2022 spending bill.**