

HIV CLINICAL SERVICES IMPROVEMENT ACT

Senator Tammy Baldwin

Strengthening our federal response to HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS remains a public health crisis in our country. Every year, more than 50,000 Americans become newly infected with HIV. Despite medical advances, people living with HIV still face significant physical, emotional, and financial burdens to quality health care.

In Wisconsin today, there are an estimated 8,200 people living with HIV. But, only 63 percent of those diagnosed were in health care and only 46 percent had a suppressed viral load, indicating they were adequately managing their disease. Across the country, only 30 percent of Americans living with HIV are achieving viral suppression. We must do better.

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program provides medical care for people living with HIV/AIDS who do not have adequate health coverage or resources to cope with the disease. Part C of the Ryan White Program directly funds community clinics and health centers that deliver quality, comprehensive HIV care to over 275,000 people a year. As many Part C clinics serve a large number of our underserved and uninsured, they often struggle with insufficient funding and Medicaid reimbursement. Since 2001, the number of patients served by Part C increased by 74 percent, while funding only increased by 8 percent.

The HIV Clinical Services Improvement Act improves health care access by strengthening Ryan White Part C clinics to ensure that these community providers have the capacity and supports to deliver high-quality care to those living with HIV/AIDS. The bill would:

- Authorize all Part C clinics to be eligible for enhanced Medicaid reimbursement that will better support timely, comprehensive HIV care;
- Require that Part C clinics meet applicable quality and reporting standards to receive the enhanced reimbursement level and assure high-quality care;
- Ensure an equitable reimbursement rate for all Part C grantee medical clinics; and
- Allow Part C clinics to expand their workforce and operations to care for the growing number of our medically vulnerable HIV/AIDS population.

This legislation would strengthen the sustainability of all Part C clinics as vital, ongoing providers of HIV care in our communities across the country. Improving access to and delivery of effective care to persons living with HIV is a critical public health goal that will help lead us to an AIDS-free generation.

The HIV Clinical Services Improvement Act is supported by:

- The AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin
- AIDS United
- Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition
- HIV Medicine Association
- AIDS Arms, Inc.