



c/o NATAP
580 Broadway Suite 1010, New York, NY 10012
1-888-26-NATAP (212) 219-0106
fax (212) 219-8473
<http://www.hepcadvocacy.org>
nationalcoalition@hepcadvocacy.org

Dear:

We are writing on behalf of the National HIV/HCV Co-infection Coalition to request your support in the fight against HIV/HCV co-infection. At least four million Americans have been infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV) and thousands more are infected each year. The hepatitis C virus (HCV) increasingly affects vulnerable populations across the United States. In particular, the hepatitis C virus is prevalent among HIV-positive persons, co-infecting nearly 30%. HIV accelerates HCV disease progression and as a result HCV-related end-stage liver disease has become a leading cause of death for people living with HIV.

This reality led individuals from advocacy, social service and substance abuse organizations to establish the National HIV/HCV Co-Infection Coalition. The enclosed letter, written by coalition members, explains issues of HIV/HCV co-infection and suggests service and infrastructure changes necessary to affectively address the HIV/HCV co-infection epidemic in the United States. More than one hundred co-infected individuals, advocates, clinicians, social service and addiction treatment professionals have signed onto this letter.

We hope that upon reading the enclosure, you will better understand the significance of HIV/HCV co-infection, and that you will support initiatives that will positively affect the lives of Americans living with this diagnosis. During this session specifically, we ask that when the time comes you,

- 1) Support Ryan White re-authorization,
- 2) Support full funding of AIDS Drug Assistance Programs,
- 3) Vote in support of the recently introduced Hepatitis C surveillance and reporting bill co-sponsored by Senators Kennedy and Hutchinson.

We request an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the issue of HIV/HCV co-infection and its impact on the HIV community; a community that is already suffering under the current funding crisis. Thank you very much for your time and for making HIV/HCV co-infection a priority in the coming congressional session.

Sincerely,
National HIV/HCV Co-Infection Coalition Steering Committee