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SPENDING FREEZE, LATINO'S AND HIV/AIDS

WASHINGTON DC, January 28, 2010 – As representatives and advocates of Latino/Hispanic Communities impacted by HIV/AIDS in America we felt compelled to respond to concerning issues raised by President Barack Obama in his first State of the Union address. The President outlined key areas of concern but also reminded us of the commitment as Americans to work together to resolve the many problems that our communities face. The President outlined his willingness to work with the congress to take measures to bring down our deficit and create more jobs. But, we know that it will take time to witness the fruits of that labor.

On behalf of the membership of the National Latino AIDS Action Network (NLAAN), the Leadership Committee felt it necessary to highlight our concern of the domestic spending freeze that will directly impact the programs that serve as a lifeline to countless individuals affected by HIV/AIDS. Our concerns go beyond the medical management of the disease, but include key components that serve as a safety net and allow people living with HIV/AIDS to continue contributing effectively to society. Our apprehension is related to housing, education, rehabilitation and nutrition among others. Freezing spending for programs with a demonstrated growing demand of integrated services will be devastating to people living with HIV and to their family networks.

At a time in which the AIDS Drug Assistance Program is collapsing under the burden of new participants who enroll due to escalating unemployment and deprivation of health care insurance benefits we see the urgency to strengthen state and federal budgets that will offer continuation of care to this vulnerable population. Our community cannot afford the proposed funding stagnation. We need new funding for HIV prevention education, treatment, care and housing and we need it now!

NLAAN believes that cost containment will only create more HIV infections and higher healthcare costs for many of our most vulnerable populations.

About NLAAN: The *National Latino Hispanic AIDS Action Network* (NLAAN) was developed in response to the HIV/AIDS crisis within Latino communities and is a participatory and collaborative network of concerned Latinos, community leaders, health and service providers, advocates and representatives of state and local health departments. NLAAN identifies and prioritizes the key needs of Latinos in the United States and its territories regarding HIV/AIDS care and prevention, sets specific federal policy recommendations, mobilizes Latino leadership and increases access to services and resources.

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