

AIDS Assistance Program Spared from Budget Cuts

Ryan Lee

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On Wednesday, Georgia's AIDS Drug Assistance Program escaped proposed budget cuts when the state Board of Human Resources approved a revised budget that attempted to shelter direct care services. The board oversees the Department of Human Resources, which includes Georgia's HIV programs. ADAP's budget had been scheduled for a \$1.5 million reduction for fiscal year 2004, which would have resulted in the program suspending new enrollment, creating a waiting list and removing at least 994 clients from its active roster in two years. Jeff Graham, executive director of AIDS Survival Project, credited the ADAP staff, veteran board members and people living with HIV/AIDS for saving ADAP from the proposed cuts. Gov. Sonny Perdue, who ordered state agencies to reduce their budgets by 2.5 percent and 5 percent for FYs 2004 and 2005, respectively, is satisfied with the revised budget. The board also unanimously approved a motion to begin a mandatory 30-day waiting period before deciding on when to implement an HIV reporting system using names instead of codes. In order to avoid reductions in federal funding, Georgia must implement an HIV reporting system by Dec. 31, said DHR spokesperson Richard Quartarone.

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