



February 11, 2011

Dear Member of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee:

On behalf of the HIV Health and Human Services Planning Council of New York, I write to encourage you to include language in the final enacted budget that will reduce the costs of housing for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) known as the 30% rent cap. As you know, poor people with AIDS in private market apartments are currently required to pay all but \$330 per month of their income toward rent, leaving them with a total of \$11 dollars per day with which to pay for food, trips to see physicians and other health care providers, utilities, and other items. We strongly urge you to cap the rent contribution for low income PLWHA at 30% of their income, thereby leaving them with a bit more money for life's necessities. The present system, under which clients pay substantially more than 30%, leads to rent arrears and eviction. The proposed system would diminish the frequency of eviction and rent arrears and ultimately save money for the City and New York State.

The HIV Health and Human Services Planning Council of New York is a community planning body comprised of health care and service providers, governmental representatives, advocates, and consumers. Members make decisions concerning the allocation and distribution of over \$100 million dollars from the federal government for treatment and care of PLWHA in the New York EMA (the five boroughs and Westchester, Rockland, and Putnam counties). Planning Council members are familiar with the devastating impact of this chronic illness on marginalized and disenfranchised populations and recognize the vital contribution of decent housing to managing AIDS-related illnesses and the hardship imposed by trying to survive on \$11 per day.

Thank you in advance for your concern for people living with AIDS.

Very truly yours,

Matthew Lesieur
Community Co-Chair