

Trump Agency Is Using Federal HIV Funds to Separate Immigrant Families

Advocacy group AIDS United is working to confirm that current Ryan White HIV funding is not affected by the Trump policy.

July 11, 2018 By [Trent Straube](#)

The Trump administration's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is preparing for a possible surge in child separations at the border, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) plans to budget for this by reallocating money from the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, according to internal documents obtained and [reported on by Slate magazine](#).

In fact, the process of transferring the HIV funds has already begun, Slate reports. The Ryan White program provides uninsured or underinsured people living with HIV access to medication and treatment.

According to the ORR documents Slate obtained, the refugee resettlement agency could need as many as 25,400 beds for immigrant minors by the end of 2018. Currently, Slate reports, about 11,800 children are in ORR's care. This number includes unaccompanied minors who arrived at the border without a parent or guardian, as well as the 2,000 to 3,000 children who were separated from their parents at the border.

It is unclear how many of the total 25,400 beds will be allotted for child separations or how long ORR will keep the children.

There's much more to read in the Slate article.

AIDS United tweet "hands Off:

**BREAKING: [@AIDS_United](#) STATEMENT ON
[@realDonaldTrump](#) ADMINISTRATION PLANS TO
REALLOCATE RYAN WHITE FUNDING FOR CHILD**

SEPARATION TIED TO ZERO TOLERANCE BORDER

POLICY <https://t.co/fgBUdLD9qd#HIVresists>

[#KeepFamiliesTogether](https://t.co/fgBUdLD9qd#HIVresists) pic.twitter.com/B3ypw7JQsH

— AIDS United (@AIDS_United) [July 10, 2018](https://t.co/fgBUdLD9qd#HIVresists)

Meanwhile, Jesse Milan Jr., the CEO of national advocacy group AIDS United, released a [statement](#) about the Trump administration's plans. Here is the statement in full:

"AIDS United is troubled by Slate Magazine's report that the Trump administration plans to divert funding from the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program to cover the cost of child detention tied to its 'zero tolerance' immigration policy. We oppose any diversion of Ryan White Program funds for purposes not related to caring for the 1.2 million people living with HIV in this country. We are especially opposed to diverting Ryan White funds to cover the ever-growing costs of a policy that is unnecessary, cruel, and a violation of basic human decency.

"As a payer of last resort, the Ryan White Program covers services for people that have no other means to pay for them. Any shortages in funding to the program would result in essential services not provided to potentially thousands of Americans. This could mean people not receiving life-saving medications or losing insurance coverage because funding was not available to cover their premiums. For an administration that just recently proclaimed its commitment to ending the HIV epidemic in this country, stripping funding from the largest HIV-specific federal program defies all logic.

"This is an entirely Trump-made crisis that this administration has the power to solve at any time, free of charge. By simply reverting to the policy in place during both the Bush and Obama administrations, no child would be separated from his or her family, and there would be no additional costs accrued by the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Attempting to pay for this policy on the back of low-income people living with HIV is reprehensible. If reports of this policy are inaccurate, then we urge the administration to state so clearly and publicly. We also urge the administration reconsider its policy of 'zero tolerance.' Either way, we insist that not a single penny of funding from the Ryan White Program—or any other unrelated program at HHS—be used for this xenophobic agenda."

William McColl, AIDS United's vice president of policy and advocacy, reached out to POZ for a follow-up statement: "While we wait for the administration to confirm that no current [Ryan White] allocations would be affected, we remain opposed to diverting any funds earmarked to address the

HIV epidemic, being used for any other purpose and particularly not on forced family separations.

“AIDS United is continuing to work to uncover more details of the situation,” McColl added. “We are sending questions to administration officials and we have a previously planned national meeting on Monday at which we will seek answers.”

The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program is one of our nation’s premier public health efforts, and it is unthinkable that the Trump-Pence administration would divert funds away from HIV treatment to fund its cruel attacks on kids and families at the border. <https://t.co/TDZa7affqa>
— Human Rights Campaign (@HRC) [July 11, 2018](#)

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a national LGBT civil rights group, also weighed in on topic of Slate’s article.

“This administration’s cruelty toward undocumented children and families has been unconscionable,” said David Stacy, HRC’s director of government affairs, in a [statement](#). “Now, we learn they are considering diverting funds from programs to provide health care for people living with HIV and medical support for refugees in order to pay for this president’s heartless obsession with imprisoning kids. The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program is one of our nation’s premier public health efforts, and it is unthinkable that this administration would divert funds away from HIV treatment to fund its cruel attacks on kids and families at the border.”

If you are unfamiliar with Ryan White, check out the POZ blog entry “[The Importance of Remembering Ryan White](#).” Or read the essay in the Advocate by White’s mother linked to in the AIDS United tweet below. And be sure to follow AIDS United’s policy blog on POZ.com [here](#).

Ensuring Ryan White and Those Like Him Won’t Be
Forgotten <https://t.co/JBglovIM4z>
pic.twitter.com/wMZdqveILZ

— AIDS United (@AIDS_United) [July 11, 2018](#)

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/trump-agency-using-federal-hiv-funds-separate-immigrant-families>