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Amber Nesbitt

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NEWS

JOINING FORCES TO FIGHT AIDS

By Amber Nesbitt

The effort to stop the spread of AIDS requires a comprehensive plan that deals with all aspects of the disease, from its transmission to its cure. In America, there are numerous governmental, educational, and private organizations that deal with the many challenges presented by HIV and AIDS.

The Center for Disease Control ("CDC") and the Health Resources and Services Administration

Human Services Tommy Thompson announced that these agencies would unite to provide a more comprehensive advisory committee.

There are currently approximately 850,000 to 950,000 people living with HIV in the United States; more than 460,000 have died due to AIDS since 1981. The 2003 proposed national budget includes \$16 billion for programs relating to AIDS

two agencies will meet approximately twice a year, along with medical experts in all relevant medical and public health fields.

"This merger puts the best of both worlds – prevention and treatment – together for the benefit of all who are affected by this illness," said Secretary Thompson. "Uniting the top people from both fields in one committee will spark greater ingenuity and improved

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("HRSA") are among the two most prominent federal agencies dealing with the AIDS crisis. The CDC's Advisory Committee for HIV and STD Prevention ("ACHSP") primarily focuses on the prevention of AIDS, while the HRSA's AIDS Advisory Committee ("AAC") mainly deals with the treatment of AIDS.

While both agencies are responsible for reporting to the Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS"), they used to work independently of each other. However, in November, 2002, the United States Secretary of Health and

and HIV, an increase of \$1 billion from the 2002 budget. Of this, almost \$13 billion are apportioned for HHS, while the CDC will likely receive \$939 million for their HIV and AIDS prevention projects. The primary goal of the CDC is to reduce the number of people getting HIV from 40,000 to 20,000 by 2005.

In order to facilitate the federal response to the AIDS epidemic, Thompson initiated the merger of the ACHSP and AAC. The primary goals were to encourage collaboration and increase communication among the two agencies. Under this new system, the

coordination as we continue our war against the national and global menace of HIV and AIDS." United States Health and Human Services Press Release, *HHS Creates Unified HIV/AIDS and STD Advisory Committee to Strengthen Prevention and Treatment Efforts*, November 14, 2002, available at: <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2002pres/20021114.html>

Political support for this new collaboration has been mixed. Dr. Julie Gerberding, the Director of

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