

IMMIGRATION BILL SPREADS AIDS, TB, OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

- **RESTRICTS TREATMENT FOR HIV INFECTION/AIDS TO LEGAL IMMIGRANTS:** The welfare reform statute protected public health by exempting testing and treatment of symptoms of communicable diseases from the "deeming" rules that would otherwise deny services to most immigrants. But Title V of the Immigration bill specifically excludes HIV/AIDS from its communicable disease exception. Therefore, legal immigrants with HIV/AIDS - as opposed to other communicable diseases - would be subject to much more restrictive rules. *Under Title V legal immigrants could be tested, test positive for HIV, and then be denied coverage for ongoing treatment.*
- **INCREASES AIDS IN CITIZEN BABIES:** A legal immigrant woman has been in this country for three years and becomes pregnant. Because of the new deeming rules, she is ineligible for Medicaid. She is tested and discovers she is HIV positive. Under this bill, Medicaid could not cover her care. This endangers both herself and *her child, who will be a citizen and is three to four times more likely to get AIDS* if the mother is not treated during her pregnancy. This is in addition to the increased risk to the child's health from not receiving any prenatal care.
- **ENCOURAGES SPREAD OF AIDS IN GENERAL POPULATION:** The fear of discovery or eventual deportation will likely prevent both legal and illegal immigrants from seeking care for HIV/AIDS, thereby endangering the health of the general population. Because any treatment will be limited, health care providers will not have opportunities to educate HIV-positive immigrants on how to prevent transmission of the disease, or to offer support critical to maintaining their health and well-being. Medical studies indicate that denying treatment to HIV positive would increase the risk of HIV transmission to others, immigrants and citizens alike.
- **ENCOURAGES SPREAD OF TB AND OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IN GENERAL POPULATION:** Tuberculosis, especially multiple drug resistant TB, is much more common in people with HIV and AIDS. As their immune system weakens, they also become more active transmitters of TB and other infectious diseases to others. We can *prevent* the spread of these contagions by treating people with HIV, but Title V would instead deny treatment until immigrants are already highly contagious. In addition, the fact that *immigrants can be deported for seeking care for communicable diseases* will frighten many from seeking any health care. Driving immigrant health problems underground in this way will fuel the spread of TB, infectious pneumonia, hepatitis, measles and other diseases that endanger the health of the general population.
- **FALSE SAVINGS:** Denying outpatient care to AIDS patients will result in increased acute hospitalizations for pneumonia and other infections--with increased costs to the US health system and suffering for people with the disease. Individuals who could have worked productively and functioned normally for years will instead suffer painful and preventable diseases, and then die more swiftly.