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CRI Given ADAP Leadership Award By HIV/AIDS Service Advocacy Group

The ADAP Advocacy Association has awarded Boston-based Community Research Initiative of New England (CRI) the ADAP (AIDS Drug Assistance Program) Community Organization Award as part of its 2018 Annual ADAP Leadership Awards, which recognize individual, community, government, and corporate leaders who are working to improve access to care and treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS.

“Our dedicated staff consistently go above and beyond to ensure that our clients with HIV not only receive assistance in paying for life-saving medications, but also have a helping hand in navigating the incredibly complex health care and insurance environments,” CRI’s IDDAP Director and Deputy Executive Director Craig Wells said. “We’ve enjoyed a strong partnership in this endeavor with the MA Department of Public Health since CRI’s founding in 1989.”

CRI provides two key services: operating the Massachusetts statewide HIV Drug Assistance Program (HDAP) and initiating cutting-edge clinical HIV research. HDAP covers the cost of medications for eligible residents living with HIV, with the goal of ensuring comprehensive access to treatment. CRI has participated in critical HIV research that helped gain FDA approval of nearly all the HIV drugs now available. In 2017, CRI’s services increased access to HIV treatment by covering 156,350 prescriptions on behalf of approximately 8,000 clients and enrolled 172 people in clinical trials.

“CRI is truly a model program in their provision of HIV drug assistance services to the community, and to ensure uninterrupted access to care and treatment,” said Dawn Fukuda, Director of the Office of HIV/AIDS within the MA Department of Public Health. “They consistently deliver high-quality, accessible, and responsive benefits advocacy and drug assistance services, and do so with compassion and care. This is a well-deserved honor.”

HDAP is part of the Infectious Disease Drug Assistance Program (IDDAP), which is funded by and operated in close partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Office of HIV/AIDS. Services available through IDDAP include:

- drug assistance programs for HIV and tuberculosis;
- a program to assist with the costs of health insurance for uninsured or under-insured people living with HIV;
- a prevention program assisting with the cost of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for at-risk, HIV-negative individuals in need;
- a program to cover the costs of Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent new HIV infections among uninsured individuals who have had high-risk exposures (such as in cases of sexual assault);
- an innovative program providing outreach, training, and technical assistance to HIV+ consumers and their providers on complex health insurance issues.



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“We are incredibly grateful that aaa+ has recognized CRI for this award. The previous honorees include many people doing remarkable work in our field, and we are very pleased to be part of this year’s group of award recipients,” said CRI Founder and Executive Director Julie Marston.

Marston emphasizes the importance of the HIV Drug Assistance Program and continued research in the organization’s overall mission to end HIV. “There are three key spokes in the wheel that drives us toward an end to this epidemic: widespread access to treatment, research, and prevention. Having all three elements under one roof allows us to better serve our clients. Our involvement in innovative research helps us make adjustments as pipeline drugs become approved and made available on the HDAP formulary, and our HDAP staff often are the first to hear about challenges our clients face that may be alleviated by new research.”

“CRI embodies the community-based focus that has long been associated with appropriate and timely access to care and treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS,” aaa+ CEO Brandon Macsata said. “Serving over 12,000 clients in the greater metropolitan area of Boston, CRI not only manages Massachusetts’ HIV Drug Assistance Program, but it has also been on the front lines in fighting hepatitis C, training service providers on culturally competent care, and advocating for successful prevention strategies, just to name a few.”

COMMUNITY RESEARCH INITIATIVE (CRI) is an independent, nonprofit, community-based organization dedicated to leading the way in HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C clinical research; ensuring access to lifesaving medications and health insurance coverage for Massachusetts residents in need who are HIV-positive, have tuberculosis, or who have other infectious diseases; and disseminating state-of-the-art treatment information and education about how to access and maintain health insurance and health benefits coverage for people in need.