Contact: Courtney Mulhern-Pearson

San Francisco AIDS Foundation

(415) 487-8008

**Task Force Releases Recommendations to Help**

**San Franciscans Living with HIV Navigate Health Care Reform**

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SAN FRANCISCO, JULY 29, 2013**—For people living with HIV, health care reform brings many questions and anxieties about the future and how they will access services to remain healthy. Today, the San Francisco HIV Health Care Reform Task Force is releasing a new set of recommendations to ensure the safe and secure transition of San Franciscans living with HIV into broader systems of care as the Affordable Care Act is implemented in 2014 and beyond.

“Health care reform will result in better access to care for many people—including those with HIV. But it also includes major changes to the way HIV-related medical care and support services will be funded and delivered,” said Mike Smith, executive director of AIDS Emergency Fund and president of the HIV/AIDS Provider Network. “Our recommendations call for a transition plan that minimizes disruption in client care and establishes a comprehensive system of care that meets the needs of all people living with HIV in San Francisco.”

The goals of the recommendations are to promote successful community-based interventions aimed at outreach, testing, and linkage to care; reduce barriers to timely engagement in quality, affordable, and patient-centered care; ensure culturally-appropriate patient-centered care; promote continuity of coordinated care; and improve individual and community health outcomes.

“San Francisco is a model of innovative, multi-disciplinary, highly effective HIV care. The possibility of increased access under the Affordable Care Act creates the opportunity to strengthen our system of care and reach more people in need,” said Smith. “In order to do it right, we need to make sure that policy makers have the information they need to build upon our history of success, preserve the aspects of our system of care that work, and ensure that HIV providers and consumers have the information they need to navigate the transition successfully.”

Along with its recommendations, the task force has also released guidelines and FAQs to support HIV care clinicians, consumers, and agencies that provide services to people living with HIV as health care reform is implemented. With health care reform, many people with HIV will see changes in their health insurance status and their clinicians will see changes in the way they receive payments.

“It is important that we get this information out to people living with HIV and their health care providers now—with enough time to allow a smooth transition and make sure everyone’s questions are answered,” said Brad Hare, medical director of the Positive Health Program at San Francisco General. “Clinicians need to know what to do in order to keep providing seamless HIV-care and patients need to trust that they can still get the services they need.”

“With more than 7,000 uninsured San Franciscans living with HIV, we need to make sure no one falls through the cracks during this health care reform transition,” said Lee Jewell, co-chair of the San Francisco HIV Health Services Planning Council. “These recommendations help to ensure that doesn’t happen.”

The San Francisco HIV Health Care Reform Task Force is made up of representatives from the city’s Department of Public Health, HIV prevention and care service provider networks, the HIV Prevention Planning Council, and the HIV Health Services Planning Council.

**About the San Francisco HIV Health Care Reform Task Force**

The San Francisco HIV Health Care Reform Task Force is comprised of representatives from the City of San Francisco’s HIV prevention and care service provider networks and its HIV prevention and care planning councils. Its primary goal is to develop recommendations for a transition plan that minimizes disruption in client care, ensures access to essential HIV services, guides HIV services organizations in planning for a changing healthcare landscape, and prepares the broader healthcare system to deal with the integration of high-utilization, high-cost clients living with HIV into a larger system of primary care. The Task Force has been meeting since 2012 and will continue to provide updated resources through the rest of this year to healthcare providers and people living with HIV in San Francisco. More information: [www.sfhiv.org/community-planning/hiv-healthcare-reform-task-force](http://www.sfhiv.org/community-planning/hiv-healthcare-reform-task-force)

**###**