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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUERTO RICAN CULTURAL CENTER CONDEMNS FEDERAL HIV PREVENTION GRANT CUTS

CHICAGO, IL — The Chicago-based Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC) today condemned the federal government after a new wave of grant cuts was announced that will harm Illinois' community-led health services community non-profits as well as government-run agencies. According to a list of grants obtained by the Chicago Sun-Times, $29 million dollars on federal HIV prevention grants are on the chopping block by the Trump Administration. PRCC itself received a formal notification cutting their HIV prevention grants to the tune of $441,625.

“Let us be clear, this is an unconstitutional and blatant attack on our democracy and the health of our communities. Congress and only Congress has the power of the purse,” PRCC Executive Director José López said.

“The massive cut in public health funding, particularly for education, prevention, and services in areas such as HIV/AIDS, is happening at a time of great need. In December 2025, about 19,897 people were living with HIV (PLWH), as reported by IDPH in the Chicago EMA HIV/AIDS Monthly Surveillance Update, and new HIV cases have been increasing since 2022, with Hispanics/Latinos representing about 49.8% of all recently diagnosed cases. The Cultural Center is one of few community-based organizations providing bilingual and bicultural HIV/AIDS services for over 50 years to the Latino/Hispanic community, primarily Puerto Ricans, in the Chicago area, and they are one of the targeted organizations to experience dramatic cuts in HIV/AIDS funding,” says Aida L. Giachello, a Chicago Hispanic/Latino health expert.

“HIV prevention programs are a core public health function. The loss of this funding jeopardizes critical awareness and treatment services in communities already facing significant health disparities. South Side Help Center is committed to continuing to serve our clients, and we request the immediate restoration of services to prevent gaps in care,” indicated Vanessa Smith, Executive Director of South Side Help Center.

This move threatens to further erode the already under-funded and under-staffed HIV prevention programs that protect our communities around Chicago. PRCC's HIV/SIDA program serves hundreds of Latino communities in our region. Moreover, the situation on the ground calls for more relief and reflects the dire need for consistent HIV prevention programs.

PRCC also called on Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul to reverse course on their lawsuit against the federal government, which excluded non-profit organizations from relief from the

funding cuts. “It is unfathomable that our state attorney general would sue the federal government to restore millions in funding cuts to state agencies and exclude community-based organizations like PRCC, Alliance Care 360 and other NGOs that are doing the work on the ground to prevent the scourge of HIV/AIDS from afflicting more Latinos in Illinois,” PRCC’s Deputy Executive Director Juan M. Calderón said.

The Chicago Department of Public Health reports a sharp rise in HIV infections: diagnoses in 2024 increased 29.2% from 2022 and 12.5% from 2023. Hispanics are disproportionately affected, accounting for nearly half of new diagnoses (49.9%) and late-stage diagnoses (50%).

“Our communities already face economic barriers and social inequities that undermine their right to HIV prevention, public health, and a dignified life. Canceling these grants only deepens those inequities and harms our Latino communities across Mid-South and Southwest Chicago,” stated Ricardo Jiménez, Director of Public Health Initiatives at the PRCC.

This moment calls for empathy and solidarity, but it also calls for urgent and compelling action.

The PRCC is urging the Chicago City Council, Cook County, and the state of Illinois to use rainy day or emergency funds to mitigate this crisis. We also call on these institutions to support community-led HIV prevention programs, including initiatives by the PRCC, other minority organizations, and our oldest and most prominent Latino/a community-based program, Vida/SIDA.

We stand by other organizations who are also being impacted by these drastic measures and remain committed to defending HIV prevention programs. Alliance Care 360 expressed concern about the funding decision. In a statement, Executive Director Ariq Cabbler said, “Alliance Care 360 is concerned by HHS’s decision to withhold congressionally-approved HIV prevention funding, which supports essential services for underserved communities in Mid-South and Southwest Chicago. We are seeking clarity and appropriate oversight to ensure that critical public health resources are administered consistently, transparently, and in accordance with federal law.”

Public health is a human right and it is our duty to defend it. Drastic times call for bold initiatives and we trust our leadership will heed this call.

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