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Welvista Concludes Florida ADAP Bridge Program

COLUMBIA, SC – April 15, 2011 – Welvista announced today it filled 10,267 prescriptions for 5,403 HIV patients in Florida during a six-week period during which the South Carolina-based non-profit served as a bridge for the state’s tapped-out AIDS Drug Assistance Program.

Welvista and the five supporting pharmaceutical manufacturers provided \$23,845,427 in medications for the Florida Bridge Program. Abbott, BMS, Gilead, Merck, and ViiV partnered directly with Welvista in the Florida bridge program. Tibotec participated in the program through a different venue.

On April 1, 2011, Florida resumed providing medications to its estimated 10,000 patients, which includes the 5,403 patients who were served by Welvista in the bridge program.

“Like many states, Florida was dealing with serious budget shortfalls that were impacting a variety of essential social services,” Welvista CEO Ken Trogdon said. “Thanks to our funders like the Heinz Foundation and our partnerships in the pharmaceutical industry, Welvista was positioned to step in and ensure that thousands of uninsured HIV patients continued to receive their essential medications. This averted a tragic health crisis that could have had far-reaching consequences. We remain very concerned about the number of under- and uninsured who are at risk of losing essential assistance as a result of the deepening budget crises across the nation, and we will continue to work with our partners to develop the kind of sustainable solutions that will help address these needs while providing significant savings for healthcare providers.”

Nationally, state ADAPs are situated in the eye of a “perfect storm.” Thousands continue to enroll in state ADAPs each year due to the effects from the economic recession. Meanwhile, a litany of factors is combining to further squeeze these state programs:

- Rising drug prices on already-expensive medications. Some companies have agreed to price freezes for ADAPs while others continue to take price hikes, limited by law for ADAPs to be no more than the rate of inflation.
- Minimal increases in federal appropriations. The federal ADAP contribution has shrunk from approximately 70 percent to 50 percent of the overall national ADAP budget in recent years.
- Significant state budget cuts.
- Larger client caseloads due to HIV-positive individuals living longer. Positive developments such as national efforts to significantly expand HIV testing and linkages into care and new HIV treatment guidelines calling for earlier therapeutic treatments have further pushed ADAPs to a fiscal tipping point from which recovery will be difficult.

The National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) reports that as of April 1, 2011, there are more than 7,900 individuals on ADAP waiting lists in 11 states. Twenty states have instituted, or anticipate instituting, cost containment measures other than ADAP waiting lists before the end of the ADAP fiscal year ending in March.

With a grant from the Heinz Family Philanthropies and Abbott Laboratories, Welvista began serving ADAP waiting list clients as part of its mission in August 2010. Abbott Laboratories, Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS), Gilead Sciences, Merck and Co., Tibotec Therapeutics, and ViiV Healthcare participate with Welvista to expedite access to HIV medications for ADAP clients on waiting lists in 11 states, including Florida.

About Welvista

Welvista is an innovative model of non-governmental healthcare intervention serving thousands of patients in four states. This healthcare network provides medications at no cost to the uninsured who do not qualify for Medicaid, Medicare or VA insurance, and those who cannot afford to pay for insurance coverage on their own. To learn more about the organization, visit www.welvista.org.

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