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FEDERAL AGENCIES MUST STUDY IMPACT OF HIV-AIDS FOR FIRST TIME

Washington, D.C., July 31, 2008—Buried inside the massive legislation to provide \$48 billion to combat HIV/AIDS and other infections in the developing world are new requirements that for the first time force federal agencies in charge of dispensing those funds to assess their impact on the very people they are supposed to help.

In the past, federal agencies only had to account for where the money went. Now they will have to provide evidence that the money is actually reaching and improving the lives of people affected by HIV/AIDS and other infections.

“This is a crucial step toward making sure that the money actually reaches and changes the lives of the hundreds of thousands of families who have been devastated by AIDS,” said Victor Dukay, president and founder of the Lundy Foundation, a Denver-based nonprofit group that works with children orphaned and made vulnerable by AIDS.

The story of how the concept of measurement and evaluation got inserted into the bill is akin to a classic “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” tale.

Dukay had one small, simple hope: convince USAID and other federal agencies to make sure the money they sent to developing countries actually improved the lives of people infected with HIV/AIDS.

Dukay was frustrated by what he saw on the ground helping children orphaned by AIDS in Tanzania. He had completed his own impact evaluation on the Lundy Foundation’s work opening an orphanage in Tanzania and was astonished to find out that the federal government did not do a similar evaluation of where its money went. Dukay tried to appeal to federal agencies overseeing global AIDS relief. But no one seemed to listen to his idea.

So Dukay reached out to Washington’s best known public policy firm--Patton Boggs LLP to help win support on Capitol Hill for his idea.

A team of lawyers from Patton Boggs that included Michael Driver, Robert Kapla, Matthew Oresman and Tim Glassco, began canvassing Capitol Hill with Dukay in tow to educate lawmakers about the dearth of funding for impact studies and the detrimental effects on orphaned and vulnerable children.

The lawmakers were equally astonished. With the help of other groups also seeking to improve the effectiveness of U.S. aid, new requirements for measurement and evaluation were inserted in both the House and Senate versions of the bill.

“The federal agencies had no idea if the money that was being sent over to places like Africa was actually having the desired impact of helping people,” Dukay said. Dukay was one man from a small foundation with a large goal: make AIDS funding more effective, said Oresman, part of the Patton Boggs team.

“These might appear to be slight changes but they will make a world of difference for those dying from HIV or AIDS,” Oresman said. “For the first time, the United States now have the framework to make sure the money it is sending abroad is effectively used and that it will reach the people it is intended to reach and have the desired impact. This is a win for the people in need as well as the American taxpayers.”

To reach Victor Dukay call: 303-589-0737 (cell)

For more information about the Lundy Foundation and its efforts in Tanzania click here:
http://www.lundy-africa.org/research_promise.html

For more information about the Patton Boggs Team:
<http://www.pattonboggs.com/>

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