



NATIONAL BLACK WOMEN'S
HIV/AIDS
NETWORK



H M O C C
HETEROSEXUAL MEN OF COLOR COALITION

World AIDS Day Statement
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A Call to Action:

As the United States commemorates World AIDS Day, Black Americans continue to suffer a significant and disproportionate burden of the HIV epidemic in the United States. In solidarity, the National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, the National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition and the Heterosexual Men of Color Coalition have come together in this time of crisis to work collectively to achieve the goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and reverse the course of the epidemic within our community. The social determinants of low literacy, unemployment, and the prison industrial complex, lack of stable and affordable housing, food insecurity and poor access to high-quality health care contribute to an environment that produces a high level of HIV risk for to many in our nation. On December 1, World AIDS Day, we call on governments, all sectors of private industry, philanthropy and community leaders to join us in "Getting to Zero" of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths.

New data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released this week has once again sounded the alarm that demands an urgent response. According to the *Vital Signs* report, new infections among young black men and women ages 13 to 24 years continue to accelerate. The HIV prevalence among blacks/African Americans overall is nearly three times higher than among Hispanics/Latinos, nearly eight times higher than among whites and MSM overall and 40 times higher than other men which contributes to the disproportionate number of new HIV infections among black/African American youths and young MSM. The percentage of youths tested for HIV, however, was low, particularly among males. More than half of youths with HIV (59.5%) were unaware of their infection. This level of undiagnosed and untreated HIV infection presents a real threat to reaching the goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy or the global effort of getting to zero.

Last year on World AIDS Day, President Obama noted, “When new infections among young black gay men increase by nearly 50 percent in 3 years, we need to do more to show them that their lives matter. When Latinos are dying sooner than other groups, and when black women feel forgotten, even though they account for most of the new cases among women, then we’ve got to do more.”

We join President Obama in recognizing the urgency of this moment. This year, we call on our nation's leaders to commit to a clear plan of action to support efforts to end AIDS in the Black community. The core elements of this blueprint for the United States must include:

- * Balanced, rational fiscal reform as the long-term solution to our nation’s current situation. Any federal budget agreement must not disproportionately harm the safety net programs that the poor, including those living with HIV rely upon. These programs include Medicare, Medicaid, Ryan White, Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

- * The priorities of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy must be implemented including the difficult job or redirection of existing resources to address the most heavily impacted populations with scientific and programmatic efforts that are culturally appropriate, scalable, and measurable for effectiveness.

- * The cost to the nation of high levels of unemployment, poor education, including health literacy, and lack of access to high-quality health for Black Americans can no longer be ignored. Investments to address these conditions must be prioritized. Full implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in partnership with essential programs like the Ryan White program for people living with HIV/AIDS is essential to our progress.

Representing the broad diversity of our communities, our solidarity has formed from the experience of Black gay men, Black women and Black heterosexual men who are all deeply committed to advancing our communities' collective health and well-being. The Black community must continue to educate itself about the significant and persistent impact that HIV continues to have inter-generationally, especially on our young gay men, and commit itself to full equality in civic life and employment, elimination of bias including homophobia and sexism, reducing the high rates of domestic violence and childhood sexual abuse. Throughout the history of our nation, Black Americans have demonstrated their resilience and ability to combat severe threats to our survival. The HIV epidemic is such a threat and it must be treated as such. It will take all hands on deck to change the community norms that promote unsafe behavior to norms that celebrate broad and regular use of health promotion strategies.

Let us all join hands in this effort.

About the National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network (NBWHAN) - The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network (NBWHAN or "the Network) is organized to provide leadership and expertise in the prevention and spread of HIV/AIDS and other health disparities that affect black women and girls nationally and internationally. The mission of the NBWHAN is to reduce the burden of morbidity, mortality and stigma of HIV/AIDS and other health disparities associated with gender, social, and economic inequities among Black women and girls.

About the National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition (NBGMAC) – NBGMAC is committed to improving the health and well-being of Black gay men through federal advocacy focused on research, policy, community education, health literacy and training. NBGMAC was founded in April 2006 by Black gay activist concerned about the persistent health disparities facing Black gay men and the lack of federal response to CDC data showing the disproportionate burden of HIV on Black gay men. For more information about NBGMAC, please visit – www.NBGMAC.org.

About the Heterosexual Men of Color Coalition (HMOCC)- The mission of HMOCC is to give a voice to heterosexual men of color who are affected by many health disparities, including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, mental health, substance abuse, & HIV by empowering ourselves and our community with the information and tools to make better health decisions. We will do this by increasing visibility, leadership, advocacy, and development of policies that affect the health of our community.