



December 2008

Mr. John Podesta  
Ms. Valerie Jarrett  
Mr. Peter Rouse  
Co-Chairs, Obama-Biden Transition Project  
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Podesta, Ms. Jarrett, and Mr. Rouse:

The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network (NBWHAN) applauds President-Elect Obama in calling for a National AIDS Strategy for the United States. NBWHAN joins the AIDS community in the development of a National AIDS Strategy, with an emphasis on Black Americans designed to lower HIV incidence, increase access to HIV care, and reduce racial disparities in the epidemic. NBWHAN endorses "AIDS in American: Recommendations for the First 100 Days of Office of the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States."

The release of the new HIV incidence data in 2008 by the CDC shows that an estimated 56,300 new HIV infections occurred in 2006. The data further shows that the majority of these new infections occurred among Black Americans. NBWHAN believes that 56,300 new infections reaffirms that Black Americans are most impacted by HIV/AIDS in the United States. In fact, the Black community, particularly women, girls and their families find themselves in a national state of public health emergency, with an HIV prevalence rate that is 18 times the rate of white women.

During 2005, 35% of all HIV-positive women and adolescent girls in the US converted to AIDS in less than 12 months from receiving an initial HIV diagnosis. As a result, the proportion of women in the U.S. living with HIV/AIDS has more than tripled since the beginning of the epidemic. As recently as 2007, 46% of people living with HIV/AIDS were women and HIV/AIDS is now the leading cause of death for Black women age 25-34 years.

NBWHAN, comprised of women with HIV/AIDS, agency executives and leaders in research, program implementation and care and treatment respectfully calls upon the incoming Obama Administration to take immediate actions to improve the lives of Black women and girls, and their families living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Attached are recommendations developed by NBWHAN garnered from our participation in federal consultations, focus groups NBWHAN conducted with women in communities with high incidence rates of HIV/AIDS, at local and national conference roundtable discussions and workshops, regular discussions with our membership and a review of existing HIV policies.

The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network respectfully request a meeting with officials of the incoming Administration to discuss our recommendations for action. We look forward to working with President-Elect Obama, his transition team and his Administration on domestic issues concerning HIV/AIDS and constructing an agenda, which would benefit Black women, and girls, and their families impacted by HIV/AIDS. In order to arrange such a meeting please contact Ivy Turnbull, Chair of Public Policy at 718-245-4756 or via email at [bpanivy1@aol.com](mailto:bpanivy1@aol.com).

Sincerely

Barbara Joseph, Co-Chair  
National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network

Jacqueline Coleman, Co-Chair  
National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network

Ivy Turnbull, Chair of Public Policy  
National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network

The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network's (NBWHAN) mission is to be a voice and advocate for Black women and girls living with or affected by HIV/AIDS by engaging in policy and program initiatives that fight gender, social and health inequities.