



***The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc., and NMAC Commemorate National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day:
"Our Cause-Our Voices"***

March 10, 2015: Every 47 minutes, a woman is diagnosed with HIV. March 10, 2015 will mark the 10th annual observance of National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. Since 2006, partners on the federal, national and community levels have joined to bring awareness to the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls. On this day, organizations nationwide work to spread information, share resources and start conversations on the importance of prevention, care and treatment and reducing stigma.

Women of color are disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS. Despite seeing a 21% decrease in new HIV infections among African American women, current trends suggest 1 in 32 African American women and girls will be infected with HIV over their lifetimes, in comparison to 1 in 106 Latino women and 1 in 526 Caucasian women infected with HIV. Despite 30 years of advancement in the fight against HIV/AIDS, we have a long way to go to eliminate this disparity. We must address the social determinants of health – poverty, education, unemployment – that cause this epidemic to be so devastating to women of color, in particular African-American women. This is a social injustice that our communities must come together to end. We must make sure that our mothers and daughters, caretakers and advocates, are educated, empowered and supported in their efforts in combating HIV in their communities.

"Black women and girls must continue to educate themselves about the significant impact that HIV continues to have on them and their community", commented Barbara Joseph, Chair of the National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc. " We must commit ourselves to eliminating racism, sexism, the high rates of violence and sexual abuse experienced by women and girls if we truly want to impact this disease. " Today, we call on our nation's leaders to commit to a clear plan of action to support efforts to end this epidemic in the Black community and in particularly among Black women and girls.

From Harriet Tubman to Angela Davis to Michelle Obama, women have been leaders and fighters in the struggle for strong and healthy families and communities. "With NMAC's new mission to educate, advocate, collaborate and compel– **with urgency** –for health equity within communities of color in our tireless quest to end the HIV epidemic, we pledge our unwavering support with the Black Women's Network, to orchestrate real change results in the fight for racial justice and health equity for black women," said Jacqueline Coleman, Director of the Leadership Pipeline and Network member. "In this quest, we pledge to prioritize, train and prepare youth girls to serve as we march toward the end of HIV as we know it."

For far too long, the voices of Black women and girls have not been heard when it comes to their health care needs. On this National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, the National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc., and its members along with NMAC commit to addressing the inequalities in health care so that Black women and girls will one day realize a world without HIV/AIDS.

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