



NATIONAL BLACK WOMEN'S HIV/AIDS NETWORK

Statement regarding CDC's Revised Estimate of HIV Incidence in the United States
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The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the long awaited new HIV incidence data to the world at the 17th International Conference in Mexico City. For over a decade the CDC has reported that there have been 40,000 new infections per year, however, findings published in a special HIV/AIDS issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) show that in 2006, an estimated 56,300 new HIV infections occurred – a number that is significantly higher than the prior estimate. The data further shows that the majority of these new infections occurred among African Americans.

African Americans have the highest rates of illness and death from chronic illnesses and communicable diseases, higher than all other minorities combined, which was a fact before the 26 year old AIDS epidemic. The African American community, particularly women, children and men who have sex with men now find themselves in a national state of public health emergency, in the richest country in the world, with no support from government in the form of a national AIDS strategy, despite the United States generous allocation of \$50 billion in new emergency AIDS relief funding to PEPFAR last week.

The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network (NBWHAN), comprised of women with HIV/AIDS, agency executives and leaders in research, program implementation and care and treatment said the 56,300 new infections reaffirms that African Americans are most impacted by HIV/AIDS in the U.S.. A new report by the Black AIDS Institute indicates that if African Americans were their own country we would rank 16th among the nations eligible for emergency aid through the recent reauthorization and expansion of the President's Plan for Emergency AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). This is an outrageous and egregious reality to a people brought here in slavery that built this nation and are now dying from a lack of resources, and a community led and directed national plan, which is the recognized strategy for combating AIDS in all of the global impacted nations.

“As women and the gatekeepers of our communities and families who took up the fight on the war on AIDS, we find ourselves in peril in our own nation without benefit of adequate support. We continue to talk about how effective evidenced-based interventions are in preventing HIV and AIDS in the United States. However considering the new incidence estimates and the devastating effect this disease is having on African American women, their children, and their families and on African American gay men clearly there's something wrong” said Barbara Joseph co-chair of the National Black Women's HIV AIDS Network. By the time the dollars allocated for prevention reach our communities, it's only enough to reach a few.”

As women on the front line of HIV and AIDS, the NBWHAN calls on national and local governments, community leaders and our community at large to join us in demanding that the federal government declare a national public health state of emergency in African American communities and increase funding for programs targeting African American women. We also join in the request of the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS to call for an emergency session of congress to address the impact of these new numbers on African American communities and support the passage of the AIDS Elimination Act. We join the AIDS community in the development of a national AIDS strategy with emphasis on African Americans, and in solidarity fully support the demands of our brothers in the National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition.

Jacqueline Colman, co-chair of the NBWHAN stated, "women are often left behind in everything that is done in this epidemic, but the fact that we have a disease in our communities that resembles those in under developed nations is a testament that government has once again left a large segment of the women in our nation to fend for themselves, that is simply unacceptable"

The NBWHAN has been successful in working with many advocacy groups as well as local and national organizations to garner support for women's issues in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Founded in 2007 the NBWHAN has worked to influence the development of research initiatives and resources that will have a positive impact on program development and design for women and produce scientific based evidence of success. The NBWHAN is a community led initiative born out of the urgent need for African American women to set and implement a national HIV/AIDS agenda for African American women in the areas of prevention, care, treatment, public policy and funding for all African American women living with or at risk of HIV and AIDS and their families.

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