



National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network Commemorates National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

March 10, 2010: The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network (NBWHAN) asks every woman and girl, particularly African American women and girls to know their HIV/AIDS status and protect themselves. We are at a time in this epidemic when every 35 minutes a woman tests positive for HIV and when it is estimated that one in 30 Black women will be diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime.¹

"This is the time when Black women and girls must become educated about HIV/AIDS and get tested," said Barbara Joseph, Co Chair of NBWHAN. "Our future generations are at stake and if we don't get a handle on this disease it will surely destroy us," continued Ms. Joseph.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, women account for 26% of annual HIV/AIDS diagnosis. Black women represent 65% of the total number of women currently living with HIV/AIDS.²

"As we pause to acknowledge the significance of National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, we are hopeful that movement on behalf of this distinct and viable population of society will be forthcoming with all deliberate speed," stated Jacqueline Coleman, Co Chair of NBWHAN.

With an HIV prevalence rate that is 22 times the rate of white women, Black women and girls infected with HIV/AIDS find themselves in a national state of public health emergency, without the enactment of a National AIDS Strategy, and representative voice of an HIV positive Black woman on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA).

"There is something inherently wrong when a society discounts its most precious commodity, that being women and children," stated Ivy Turnbull, Policy Chair of NBWHAN. As Black women we have a collective responsibility to our community that is connected to our belief that our survival is dependent upon one another".

NBWHAN calls upon Black women and girls living with and affected by HIV/AIDS to come together and ensure that the needs of African American women, girls and their families living with and affected by HIV/AIDS become an integral part of this country's HIV/AIDS agenda.

About the National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network (NBWHAN)

The NBWHAN have been successful in working with advocacy groups, local and national organizations to garner support for women's issues in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Founded in 2007 the NBWHAN is working 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 Black women to set and implement a National HIV/AIDS agenda for Black women and adolescent girls in the areas of prevention, care, treatment, public policy and funding for all Black women and adolescent girls living with or at risk of HIV and AIDS and their families.

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References:

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2008). CDC HIV/AIDS Fact Sheet-HIV/AIDS among Women. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

² The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (2009). HIV/AIDS Policy Fact Sheet, The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the United States. Washington, DC: The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.