



## National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc. Applauds the White House Office of National AIDS Policy on the Release of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States: Updated to 2020

### *A New Approach to Ending the HIV Epidemic in the Nation*

**July 30, 2015:** Today, the White House Office of National AIDS Policy released the National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States: Updated to 2020 at Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia. While the updated Strategy retains the vision and goals originally outlined in 2010, it *recognizes that HIV does not impact all Americans equally* and that Black gay and bisexual men, Black women and men, Black gay youth 13-24, and Black transgendered women experience a particularly high burden of HIV disease.

“When you look at the current epidemic it’s Black, commented Barbara Joseph, Chair of the National Black Women’s HIV/AIDS Network, Inc. As a Black woman who has lived with this disease for over 30 years we cannot continue to *nod and wink* about what’s going on in our communities. It’s time that we focus our collective will on combating this epidemic.

While HIV testing rates have steadily increased, more than half of Americans still have not been tested for HIV in their lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Testing rates remain far too low among groups at high risk for HIV. Although Black Americans are more likely to get tested for HIV than Latinos or whites, more than a third have never been tested.<sup>2</sup> As described in the [June 26 edition of Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#), the proportion of HIV-positive people who know their status varies widely from state to state. Thirty-six (36) jurisdictions saw increases in HIV prevalence of 5 percent or more, with significant increases in 23 jurisdictions overall.

While HIV testing is a core part of CDC’s commitment to High-Impact Prevention (HIP)<sup>3</sup>, it has failed to include proven effective evidenced-based HIV prevention interventions specifically for Black women and girls at risk and living with HIV in their HIP portfolio.

Historically, Black women and girls have been underrepresented in HIV research, treatment, care, and prevention efforts. This underrepresentation has undoubtedly led to the dramatic rise in the number of Black women and girls living with HIV.

During a meeting in April, 2015, hosted by the White House Office of National AIDS Policy, the National Black Women’s HIV/AIDS Network, submitted a list of recommendations including proposed action steps for implementation (see [nbwhan@nbwhan.org](mailto:nbwhan@nbwhan.org)). We called for the inclusion of Black women and girls in CDC’s effort to maximize the impact of its current prevention strategy.

The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc., remains steadfast in our vision and intention to work with member organizations across the country, our brothers at the National Black Gay Men's HIV Advocacy Coalition and Douglas Brooks, Director of the National Office of AIDS Policy. We are moving into a higher level of consciousness, action, and urgency in order to stem the tide of HIV in our community. As gatekeepers of our community and caregivers of our families, we look toward the future, take ownership of the proposed compelling challenges outlined in the NHAS 2020, and recommit our voices as a force of change, believing that our lives matter and when one dies all communities die.

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**About the National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network, Inc.** The National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network (NBWHAN) 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.

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References:

<sup>1</sup> CDC. HIV Testing Trends in the United States, 2000-2011. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: [http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/testing/resources/reports/pdf/Testing%20Trends\\_cleared\\_01282013.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/testing/resources/reports/pdf/Testing%20Trends_cleared_01282013.pdf). Published January 2013.

<sup>2</sup> CDC. Vital Signs: HIV testing and diagnosis among adults – United States, 2001-2009. *MMWR* 2010;59(47):1550-55.

<sup>3</sup> HI Hall, Q An, T Tang, et al. Prevalence of Diagnosed and Undiagnosed HIV Infection -- United States, 2008-2012. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* [64\(24\):657-662](https://doi.org/10.1182/2015.06.657). June 26, 2015.