



MEDIA ADVISORY

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NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY IS FEBRUARY 7TH, 2012

Mark your calendars and set the date! February 7, 2012 is **National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD)**, a national HIV/AIDS testing and treatment community mobilization initiative designed to encourage Blacks across the United States and Territorial Areas to **get educated, get tested, get involved, and get treated** around HIV/AIDS, as it continues to devastate Black communities.

In 2009, an estimated **16,741** Blacks were diagnosed with AIDS in the US, a number that has slowly decreased since 2006. By the end of 2008, an estimated **240,627** Blacks with an AIDS diagnosis had died in the US. In 2007, HIV was the **ninth** leading cause of death for all Blacks and the **third** leading cause of death for both Black men and Black women aged 35–44. Unfortunately, many of those who are infected with HIV are unaware of their status and may unknowingly transmit the virus to others. It's time to mobilize and talk about this devastating disease so we can make a difference... and there's no better time than February 7th! On this commemorative day, Blacks are encouraged to *get educated, get tested, get involved, and get treated* around HIV/AIDS. Special events such as press conferences, town hall meetings, health fairs, church services, community marches and rallies, candlelight vigils, and free HIV testing will be held throughout the nation.

"We have to challenge the mindset and notion that Black people are disposable based on their sexual orientation, drug addiction or behavior, we didn't have that option on the slave ships or plantations – so why now? We can turn this epidemic around if we act now." says **LaMont "Montee" Evans**, of Healthy Black Communities, Inc, NBHAAD Chairperson and overseer of **NBHAAD National Planning Council**.

While Blacks represent approximately 14% of the U.S. population, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the group accounts for 44% of the nation's new HIV infections.

In its twelfth year, NBHAAD organizers remain focused on all cities where Black communities are disproportionately impacted and the epidemic is not slowing. Some of these cities include **Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, Newark, New York, Oakland, Philadelphia, Raleigh-Durham, San Francisco, Trenton and Washington, D.C.**

Several Black celebrities and community leaders have served as the face and voice of this huge effort while encouraging thousands of Black communities to mobilize and do something that will be long-lasting in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Past spokespersons include: **President Barack H. Obama (during his time as Illinois Senator), Congressman Elijah E. Cummings; Tony Dungy; Idris Elba; Kimberly Elise; Lance Gross; Hill Harper; Taraji P. Henson; Tom Joyner; Congresswoman Barbara Lee; Ludacris; Master P; Tangi Miller; Patrik-Ian Polk; General Colin Powell; Sheryl Lee Ralph; Gloria Reuben; Romeo; Rev. Edwin Sanders; Tavis Smiley; and Congresswoman Maxine Waters.**

Currently, NBHAAD is directed, planned and organized by a group known as the **National Planning Council** who partners with local, regional and national partners to mobilize communities and address specific issues in regards to local epidemics.

For more information on **National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day**, visit www.blackaidsday.org.

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