

THE NIA ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2009

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GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we are transitioning from the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS, this seems like a good time to reflect on the state of AIDS in Black America. Everyone is aware of how resources are slowly being cut back and reduced. We are challenged with continuing to fight the spread of HIV and provide care and treatment to those living with AIDS on local, state and national levels.

The Nia Alliance continues to operate effectively with our limited resources because of your commitment and support. We can not continue to fight this fight alone, we need all of you to stand on the front lines and be the voices crying in the wilderness. People of African descent are contracting HIV at alarming rates. It only takes one person to inform, educate and encourage. To be realistic, we can only combat this disease one person, family and one church at a time. I encourage you all to reach out to your sisters and brothers in the Nia Alliance to become apart of the change that we seek. This fight is far from over.

We are also transitioning from Holy Week and Resurrection Sunday. Christ calls us to reach out and reach up. I am in the process of reaching out to you because I need your help. We are in the process of planning several large community events to increase access to HIV testing and care. These events include a women's conference (ASHA-Addressing Sexual Health and AIDS), a conference for men, a community cook out, etc.

We need you, your community needs you for such a time as this.

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, Luke 4 (NIV)

*Thanking you in advance,
Nancy*

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HIV/AIDS RATE IN WASHINGTON D.C. TOPS WEST AFRICA

Submitted by Sister Gwen Anderson and stated every so poignantly, below is an excerpt from an article from BlackAmericaWeb.com.

*FYI – such alarming news. We **must** persevere and run this course. The devil is a liar. To God Be the Glory!!*

“Know Your Status” are the words of the moment, second, minute, hour, day, week, month, and year.

Get tested. Know your status and be tested regularly.

That’s the message health experts in Washington, D.C. want to get across, following a report released in last month that revealed at least 3 percent of the city’s residents have HIV or AIDS, a total that exceeds the 1 percent threshold that constitutes an epidemic.

With 2,984 residents per every 100,000 over the age of 12 - or 15,120, according to the 2008 epidemiology report by the District’s HIV/AIDS office – that means the city’s rate of HIV/AIDS infection is higher than West Africa’s.

“We think information is power, and every time we release information, we do capture another level of the population who recognize HIV is important to their lives,” said Shannon Hader, M.D., director of D.C.’s HIV/AIDS Administration.

Hader said many Americans have relaxed because they either think they are not at risk for the disease or that their health care professionals are routinely testing them for HIV/AIDS. Many doctors think they will catch the patients at greatest risk simply by asking them about their sexual history and activity. An HIV/AIDS screening should be as routine as having one’s blood pressure checked. Sexual history should not matter, she said.

In the African-American community particularly, many straight black men believe that AIDS is still largely a gay white man’s disease, and while the report said that only three in 10 people surveyed said they used condoms, “anecdotally, I would tell you that the number is lower among African-Americans,” said Regina Newkirk, director of development communications and community relations for the Whitman-Walker Clinic.

“There have been several studies that show there are people who associate condoms with being gay or being white,” she added. “There are African-American men refusing to wear condoms and African-American women who do not feel that they have the negotiating skills to get their partner to wear condoms.”

According to the city’s report, there was a 22 percent increase in the number of HIV/AIDS cases since the end of 2006, when 12,428 cases were reported. Black men were the biggest victims, with an infection rate of nearly 7 percent. And nearly 10 percent of the city’s residents between the ages of 40 and 49 have the virus.

“Studies have shown people truly change their behavior once they know their status, and this is across racial and gender orientation groups,” Newkirk said. “However, the big challenge for most people is the fear and letting that fear paralyze them to the extent they don’t get tested.”

“Hopefully, we’re moving into an area where when you meet someone who doesn’t have the testing done, you look at them suspiciously,” Hader said.

WOCLI-REGISTRATION EXTENDED 'TIL MAY 15

The Women of Color 3-day leadership training is confirmed for Wed, May 27-Fri the 29th at Mount Aery Baptist Church - 73 Frank Street Bridgeport, CT. Training hours—Wed and Thu from 9-5 and Fri is from 9-2. Breakfast and lunch will be served each day.

If interested, please forward your completed application to Nancy via mail, email or fax. (See attached document). Please note that these are federal trainers! All participants will receive a certificate of completion.

Introduction

The WOCLI is designed to equip and empower a cadre of skilled leaders to understand the policymaking system, the role of advocacy and the need to find a voice in the decision-making process that impacts health for Women of color. This Institute will help Women of color to build leadership in much needed programs and health services to prevent the spread and mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS and other health related diseases. Ultimately, this leadership will be instrumental in creating a healthy lifestyle and affecting quality of life for women of color.

The focus of WOCLI is more than just on one's ability to address issue of diagnosing, treating and preventing HIV/AIDS; it is about the fact that Women of color have long been disproportionately affected by chronic yet preventable diseases, which often are diagnosed too late and negatively impact longevity and quality of life. NMAC recognizes that now more than ever, strong Women's leadership in health policy is critically important.

Leadership

While these facts paint a grim picture, strength in women's leadership can turn our adversity into our ally. WOCLI aims to do this by targeting women of color in agencies and community organizations addressing health disparities and build leadership by envisioning how one's voice can change one's future and join other women in the tides that bind.

OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES...

We are currently recruiting new Nia Alliance Participants!

2nd Men's Cohort: April 21, 28 and May 5. Classes will be held Tuesday nights at 72 George St, Bridgeport, CT.

5th Women's Cohort: June 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29. Classes will be held Monday nights at GBAPP 158 Mill Hill Ave, Bridgeport, CT.

Sexually Transmitted Disease Training

Thank you for your response and interest. The STD training is now confirmed for Tuesday, June 16th at GBAPP, beginning at 5:30pm.

Dinner will be served, so we will need a final headcount by June 8th. Please send an email to Nancy to confirm your attendance.

**NIA
TRAINING
OPPORTUNITIES**

**Leadership:
While the HIV
facts paint a
grim picture,
strength in
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INTRODUCING...THE NIA ALLIANCE RESOURCE BOOK

The Nia Alliance will have its very own prayer and litany brochure that will be printed and distributed to our partners in the faith community, featuring prayers, litanies, words of comfort, poems, sermons, etc., as submitted by the members of the Nia Alliance!

If you would like to submit content to be included in the Nia Alliance Resource book, please submit the following information to Nancy in Microsoft Word format (not PDF):

- Content (prayer, litany, etc)
- Brief bio
- Cohort group (1st, 2nd, etc)

Please note that we will also need to arrange to take your picture.

The deadline to submit your information to Nancy is **May 29th**.

We look forward to your participation in this exciting project. The Nia Alliance Resource Book will be blessing to each reader!

NIA EVENTS—WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!

Stay Tuned for Details Regarding the Following Events:

Men's Conference

Month: June

Location: TBD

Community HIV Testing Event

Month: June

Location: TDB

Our Church Lights the Way HIV Testing Campaign

Month: June

Second Annual Nia Retreat

Date and Location: TBD

ASHA - Addressing Sexual Health and AIDS**Women's Conference**

Date: August 15th

Time: TBD

Location: Aldarios in Milford

**UPCOMING
EVENTS:**

**ENGAGE!
EDUCATE!
ENJOY!**

ABOUT US

THE NIA ALLIANCE

GBAPP
158 Mill Hill Avenue
Bridgeport,
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Tel: 203-366-8255

The Nia Alliance is an initiative with the goal to develop a volunteer network of men and women who are dedicated to learn and respond to the growing HIV epidemic among women of color. In August 2006, GBAPP, Inc. developed a training curriculum to prepare men and women of color to serve as volunteer liaisons to faith-based organization. Objectives for participants completing the training workshop are 1) enhance knowledge of HIV, 2) develop skills to engage peers in HIV-related services, and 3) serve as community liaisons and planning body for HIV awareness events sponsored by GBAPP.

NIA ALLIANCE MISSION STATEMENT

The Nia Alliance is a community mobilization initiative dedicated to equip people of African descent to respond effectively and emphatically to the AIDS epidemic in communities of color through education, advocacy, direct services and community collaboration. Grounded in faith, we recognize the importance of being inclusive and nonjudgmental as we empower our participants to make informed decisions.

For more information regarding the Nia Alliance and GBAPP, please contact:

Contact: Nancy Kingwood, MSHS, CHIVC
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NEXT MONTH'S EDITION

Despite the staggering news about the rate of infection in D.C., we know that there is a Balm in Gilead! As stated in the article, studies have shown that where people know their status, they truly change their behavior.

Next month's newsletter will give us some reaffirming statistics that show with testing, education and safer sex practices, the rate of transmission from infected persons to non-infection persons has decreased, SIGNIFICANTLY!

Nia, your labor is not in vain; the battle can still be won! Stay tuned!



Would you like to contribute to the newsletter? Please email your content (article, event, pictures, etc) to nkingwood@gbapp.org by the 10th of each month. Please note that Nancy will approve all newsletter content.