

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Organizations Speak Out on Women and HIV to Inform Health Policy and National AIDS Strategy

(Washington, D.C.)—Fourteen U.S. organizations working on issues related to human rights, women, and HIV/AIDS submitted a series of policy recommendations to guide the Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP) and related agencies in their efforts to achieve better outcomes for women living with and affected by HIV. The report, entitled “Critical Issues for Women and HIV: Health Policy and the Development of a National AIDS Strategy” calls attention to the factors contributing to disproportionate rates of HIV among low-income women and women of color, as well as poor health outcomes for women living with HIV – and proposes concrete solutions that integrate systems of prevention and delivery of care.

“The face of the HIV epidemic is increasingly that of a minority woman living in poverty,” said Gina Brown, Medical Case Manager of the NO/AIDS Taskforce. “Health care systems have largely neglected the complex medical, economic, and social realities of HIV-positive women.”

The working group identified six key areas of focus for better policy and practices: Meaningful involvement by HIV-positive women in development of policy and monitoring and evaluation of programs; greater consideration of HIV-positive people’s civil and human rights; health disparities in the U.S. South and rural areas; health care access; integration of sexual and reproductive health services with HIV testing, prevention and care; and HIV prevention. The report articulates specific policy recommendations that seek to improve the outcomes of women living with or vulnerable to HIV.

“Involving the expertise of HIV-positive people and those working on the frontlines of service delivery is critical to improve prevention and care outcomes for communities impacted by HIV. We must use a human rights framework as we reform health policy and develop a National AIDS Strategy that will truly reduce HIV incidence and increase access to care for women,” said Naina Khanna, Coordinator of the U.S. Positive Women's Network and Director of Policy and Community Organizing at WORLD.

Representatives from these organizations plan to meet with Jeff Crowley, Director of ONAP, and other key White House officials in the upcoming months to discuss their recommendations and the development of a National AIDS strategy.

The organizations that authored the report are African Services Committee; AIDS Alabama; Alliance of AIDS Services-Carolina; Center for HIV Law & Policy; Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP); Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE); HIV Law Project; International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW); National AIDS Fund; National Women and AIDS Collective (NWAC); Sisterlove, Inc.; The U.S. Positive Women’s Network (PWN); The Women’s Collective; and Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Disease (WORLD).

The full text of the report can be accessed at:
<http://www.genderhealth.org/pubs/onaprecommendations.pdf>

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