

Get Screened Oakland: The Highlights

Get Screened Oakland attends Senate hearing on key program in U.S. response to global HIV/AIDS (December 10, 2007) The largest global health initiative and commitment by a single government is the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The goals of PEPFAR include support for the treatment of 2 million people living with HIV, support for the prevention of 7 million infections, and support and care for 10 million people who are either infected or affected by HIV. With strong bipartisan support, PEPFAR was authorized in 2003 for a period of five years. It is through the process of authorization that Congress creates federal programs and sets their goals, general operating guidelines, and the duration they can operate before they must undergo the process again (reauthorization).

PEPFAR's authorization will expire this September 30. If the program is to continue, Congress will have to reauthorize it. President Bush has proposed that PEPFAR be reauthorized for five years. In addition, he is requesting that Congress grant the program \$30 billion in funding to cover the program's expenses over the five years of its reauthorization. If Congress honors this request, U.S. funding for global HIV/AIDS efforts will exceed \$48 billion by 2014.

As part of PEPFAR's reauthorization process, Senator Edward Kennedy, who serves as Chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, convened a congressional hearing in Washington, D.C. to hear testimony on PEPFAR's achievements, challenges, strengths, and weaknesses. Get Screened Oakland staff attended to hear the two panels called to deliver testimony. The following were among the panelists: Julie Gerberding, MD, Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Mark Dybul, MD, Director of the Office of Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC); and Peter Piot, MD, PhD, Director of the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

According to testimony, PEPFAR has been a very successful program. When President Bush announced the program in 2002, it was estimated that only 50,000 people were receiving antiretroviral treatment (ART) for HIV in sub-Saharan Africa; now, the region has more than 1,445,000 on treatment. Although PEPFAR is not solely responsible for this dramatic increase, the experts agreed that the program has played an important role in expanding the use of ART. In the future, panelists said, the program should not only continue its work to provide treatment, but also place a higher priority on preventing new infections. In 2006, the number of new infections outpaced the number of people receiving treatment by six to one.

Well before President Bush's 2002 PEPFAR announcement, Mayor Ronald V. Dellums, who was Congressman Dellums at the time, called for an ambitious program to address AIDS in Africa. As he conceived it, the program would invest money and provide other assistance to help the African continent recover from the impact of the AIDS pandemic—much the way the U.S. Marshall Plan lent massive support to Europe after World War II. Many in Congress heard the message, as did those in the White House. His early call for action inspired the work that led to PEPFAR.

Get Screened Oakland attends White House meeting on faith-based and community solutions to combat HIV/AIDS

(December 12, 2007) Each month, the White House holds a meeting known as the Compassion in Action Roundtable. The meetings highlight organizations, programs, and policies addressing critical social needs. In last month's meeting, the White House brought together leaders in the field of HIV to highlight "faith-based and community solutions to combat HIV/AIDS."

After welcoming people to the roundtable discussion, Karen Hughes, Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, spoke about the importance of the United States' "diplomacy of deeds." Ms. Hughes, who was completing her final day of service to the Bush White House in the position of Under Secretary, talked to attendees about the honor she has felt in her travels around the globe, in general, and in her meetings with heads of state and diplomats, in particular. In those meetings, activities funded and implemented by the U.S. government were often noted with appreciation. Through carefully considered action—or a "diplomacy of deeds"—the U.S. has helped to remove barriers and obstacles to improve health and well-being. Much of this work, she continued, is done by faith-based and other non-governmental organizations that receive federal funding. Ms. Hughes thanked the attendees for their hard work and dedication and assured everyone that their "deeds" were truly helping to change the world and the worldview of the U.S. government.

Roundtable facilitator Jay Hein, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, delivered a call to action. He encouraged community and faith-based organizations to join together to encourage more congregations, parishes, dioceses and faith-based organizations to get involved in work to prevent the spread of HIV at home and around the globe. As part of the call to action, Kay Warren, Executive Director of the HIV/AIDS Initiative at Saddleback Baptist Church, and the Church's Pastor, Rick Warren, gave examples of their work in HIV.

Ms. Warren's recounted her own experience learning about HIV disease and how best to respond—a process that began five years ago. Pastor Rick emphasized how important it is for communities to establish partnerships, collaborations, and relationships with faith-based institutions and their members. He said the faith community is ready and able to work on some of the most challenging and confounding problems that face the broader community today, especially HIV. "We have some lives to save," he added. While he admitted that the church arrived late to HIV efforts, he believes it is now here to stay.

Following the call to action, Ambassador Mark Dybul, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, gave an overview on international partnerships funded through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Ambassador James Kimonya, Republic of Rwanda, followed Dr. Dybul. He talked about the impact PEPFAR has had, and is having, in Rwanda, a country that has seen very difficult and trying times. Following his remarks, four international non-governmental organizations delivered brief summaries of their work: Geneva Global, World Hope, New Life Wesleyan Church and World Vision.

Marty McGeein, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, spoke about the domestic epidemic and the needs for expanded services, increased community capacity, and the need for involvement by faith-based organizations. "We are not finished with work here at home," she said. "We need to re-double our effort here at home. Many of your organizations have long histories of service abroad. We have one million Americans living with HIV in our country. Much more must be done to ensure that they receive care, treatment and services. We also need to expand our prevention messages to include the ABC approach (Abstinence, Be faithful and consistent and correct Condom use), which has been so successful in our global programs."

Continuing the dialogue on the U.S. epidemic, representatives from three organizations that provide HIV services in the U.S.—the Salvation Army of Greater Pennsylvania, ACCESS Community Health and Research Center, and Lutheran Family Health—offered their perspectives on what must be done to reduce the U.S. epidemic. According to the latest estimate by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1.7 million people are now living with HIV in this country.

Oakland Community News

Oakland hosts training on strategies for connecting HIV-positive persons to care

(January 9 -10, 2008) Staff from East Bay AIDS Center, Alameda County Medical Center/Highland Hospital, Asian Pacific Islander Wellness Center, AIDS Healthcare Foundation, Allen Temple Baptist Church, La Clinica de la Raza, Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System, Alameda County Office of AIDS and Get Screened Oakland participated in a training workshop on developing effective strategies to link persons with HIV disease to care.

More specifically, the workshop provided participants with information on a set of interventions that are being used throughout the U.S. to successfully link HIV-positive people to regular medical care for the long-term. Participants discussed the interventions and identified what made them effective. As part of this discussion, they also identified the key elements that contributed to a given intervention's success and considered ways to adapt or borrow from interventions in order to meet the needs of their respective organization's populations and setting.

The interventions were drawn from two workbooks: *Connecting to Care: Addressing Unmet Need in HIV* and *Connecting to Care II: Rural and Formerly/Currently Incarcerated*. Together, the workbooks contain step-by-step descriptions of 42 interventions. The descriptions identify the specific populations for which an intervention was designed. In addition to rural and formerly and currently incarcerated people, the identified populations include women, men, migrant workers/ families, American Indians, Latinos, recent immigrants, etc. The workbooks also contain information about the setting in which an intervention takes place. Identified settings include hospitals, clinics, community-based agencies, faith-based organizations, and social services agencies and job settings. And finally, the workbook identifies which interventions link people directly to care, which get people into a conversation that may lead to care, and which bring the agency closer to prospective clients—be it on an individual, group, or community level.

The two-day, experiential workshop was facilitated by John Ruiz, Director of Positive Prevention in Justice Research Institute's Center for Training and Professional Development. The workshop was developed through a six-year cooperative agreement between the AIDS Action Foundation, a national HIV advocacy organization in Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA). The cooperative agreement was part of HRSA's effort to decrease unmet needs in HIV care that is provided through the Ryan White CARE Act program.

Words from the Community

You Don't Live on My Street

So you want to know
Why I'm always high
and why you never
ever see me cry?
Why do I shoot up
all this junk?
Have you ever seen
Your Dad sloppy drunk?

Sure I would like
to have more knowledge
but my Dad drank up
my money for college
So, how can you look at me
with such conceit
When you don't even live on my street

So you want to know
why I ran away?
Why in boarded up buildings
'm hiding each day?
You want to know why
I choose to steal
and do what I have to
just to get a meal?

Well I don't worry any more
about getting good grades
all I worry about now
is getting AIDS
Look at you with your
life so sweet
but you don't live on my street

You ask me why at fourteen
'm having this baby?
Am I ignorant, retarded or
just plain lazy?
What on earth
was I thinking about?
I was hoping my Mama
wouldn't put me out

See your Mama's boyfriend
ain't messing with you
and putting his hands
on your little sister too
Naw, the seventh grade

So you want to know
I didn't complete
But, hey, you don't live on my street

So you want to know
Why I dropped out of school?
How many times can you be called a fool?
Ever since first grade
I been called slow
So I wouldn't give the answer
even if I did know

An how was I supposed
to concentrate
When I can't remember
the last time I ate
Do you live everyday
with defeat?
Then you don't even live on my street

You ask me why I
stay with him
when he beats my head
again and again?

You want to know why
I don't get upset
when makes each
drunken idle threat?

Well do you have rats
running cross your head
when you lay down
in your broke-down bed?
Do you have shoes to
cover your feet?
Then you don't live on my street

You want to know why
I'm not raising my chile?
Well, you know
I ain't worked in a while
You want to know
why I don't keep in touch?
Is buying some Pampers
asking too much?

You want to know why
I'm not raising my chile?

Can I start coming
'round the place
you s'posed to get out of the
kitchen if you can't take the heat
So, naw you don't live on my street

You don't know
a thing about me
but there are some things
that you must see

Until you have walked
in my shoes for a while
and had a taste
of my lifestyle

Until you have lived
in my house
and given a name
to each mouse

Until you've seen
your Mama get beat
You don't even live
on my street

Until you have walked
my walk
Until you have talked
my talk

Until you have knelt down
on my knees
Until you have eaten my government cheese

Until you have smelled life through
my nose
Until you have worn
my panty hose

Until you have seen life through
my eyes
Until you have worn
my dress size

Until you have heard life through
my ears
Until you have cried some of
my tears

Until you have lived inside my head
Until you have laid down in my bed

Until you have read what's on my mind
Until you have stood in my welfare line

Until you have been called out of
my name
Until you have felt some of my shame

Until you have sold some of
my dope
Until you have lost all of
my hope

Until you have stood under
my rain
Until you have felt some of
my pain

Until you have eaten
what I've had to eat
then understand this
You don't live on my street!!!

By Rebera Elliott Foston MD, MPH

Other HIV News

Newly archived documents and artifacts on the U.S. HIV/AIDS epidemic now available in Los Angeles and San Francisco

(January 2, 2008) Three organizations—ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives in Los Angeles, the special collections library at University of California, San Francisco, and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Historical Society, also in San Francisco—have completed a three-year, federally funded project to sort and catalogue hundreds of thousands of documents and artifacts that provide a window onto the history of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its effects in California and beyond, the *Los Angeles Times* reported. Stored in three separate archives in Los Angeles and San Francisco, the catalogued items will be available to visiting scholars; in addition, summaries of the collection are being prepared for wider Internet exposure.

The collection combines “dry” government documents along with papers from medical doctors and researchers, boxes of condoms, safe-sex pamphlets and posters, and other more personal items, such as family correspondence, personal narratives in journals and appointment books documenting doctor appointments, and pharmacy receipts for prescriptions and medical bills—“the cost of AIDS,” as one donor characterized his contribution.

"Most fundamentally, it means this history won't be lost," said Paul Boneberg, Executive Director of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Historical Society. "Our collections tell the story of average people and smaller organizations caught up in the greatest national disaster of modern times."

Scholars seem to agree that the collections offer texture and dimension that bring history to life. According to one, Richard McKay, a history doctoral student at the University of Oxford in England, "A big difficulty in the history of medicine is that records are left mostly by practitioners. It's often very difficult to access the voice of the patient," McKay said. "These archives do a lot for that, to a greater extent than others do."

Funding for the archive project was granted by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The Commission awarded a shared grant of \$170,000 to the Historical Society and special collections library. It also provided the ONE center with a grant \$195,000, and much of this funding supported work on the project.

Source: "Document the toll of AIDS"; Gordon, Larry; *Los Angeles Times* Online Edition, accessed 01/08/2008

Depression Worsens HIV Treatment, Study Shows

(Dec. 20, 2007) According to a study by the Kaiser Permanente Division of Research and the Group Health Cooperative, the effect of depression on HIV treatment significantly worsens a patient's adherence to highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART). However, effective antidepressant medication can reverse this outcome, the study further found. This new research, which is the largest study on the effect of depression on HIV treatment, is covered in the current online issue of the *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes (JAIDS)*.

The study looked at 3,359 HIV-infected patients from seven Kaiser Permanente regions nationwide and Group Health during the years 2000 to 2003. The objective was to measure the effects of depression on adherence and changes in viral and immunologic control in patients starting a new HAART regimen. Some study participants were being treated for depression with selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI), while others were not.

The researchers studied the patients' adherence to their HIV medications and viral loads, as well as changes in their CD4 T-cell counts over a 12-month period. The study found that depressed patients—42% of the patient group—had a lower adherence rate and worse viral therapy response compared to non-depressed patients. But depressed patients who were prescribed SSRI medication and adhered to it had the same outcomes as non-depressed patients.

"The take-home point of this study is that depression carries a worse prognosis for HAART in HIV patients. However, we also

found that SSRIs can reverse this and improve outcomes for HIV-depressed patients," said Michael A. Horberg, MD, MAS, FACP, Director of HIV/AIDS for Kaiser Permanente and the study's lead author. "HIV and depression often go hand in hand. If you are HIV-infected, you should be screened regularly for depression, and if you are depressed and you are going to go on HAART, it's very worthwhile to treat your depression."

*HAART is a well-regarded treatment for HIV in which three or more antiretroviral medications are used to slow the reproduction of the virus and the progression of HIV disease.

Source: Kaiser-Permanente press release; issue date 12/20/2007

Announcements

WORLD offers public speaking training

A training opportunity is coming up for those interested in being trained as speakers and presenters on issues relating to HIV, especially as it relates to women.

In the past, WORLD's Speaker's Bureau training has been only for HIV-positive women, but this time it will be open to positive women and other community members.

The training is 2.5 days and will be held in downtown Oakland.

Dates:

Thursday, February 7; 5:00 - 8:30 p.m. (dinner provided)

Friday, February 8; 10:00 – 5:00 p.m. (lunch provided)

Saturday, February 9; 10:00 – 4:00 p.m. (lunch provided)

WORLD is now accepting applications. Deadline to apply for this training is Friday, January 25th, 2007.

Please contact Naina Hanna with any questions at nkhanna@womenhiv.org or (510) 986-0340, ext. 316

Pacific Center's The Playful Heart: Increasing your capacity to build the relationships you want

An active workshop for HIV-positive gay, bisexual, queer men who are looking for greater social/emotional connection. This will be a day for fun, creativity, support, and challenge, of getting to know others and getting to know your "self." This may be the day you have been waiting for.

Date:

Saturday, January 26, 2008

10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. with lunch break

Lunch will be provided.

Facilitators: John Olesen, MA; Ralph Thomas, MS; Lenny Pinna, MFA.

The event is free, however space is limited. To register and participate, an interview is required. For more information, contact Aaron Testard, HIV Program Manager, Pacific Center, (510) 548-8283, ext 240.

National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities presents the 2008 National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS

NAESM will host its fourth annual National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS from January 24 to 27, 2008 in Oakland, California at the Oakland Hilton Airport Hotel, One Hegenberger Road, Oakland, CA 94612. The conference will help strengthen HIV/AIDS research, prevention, and care strategies targeting African American men who have sex with men (MSM).

The conference's theme is "Breaking Barriers. Moving Forward." With this theme, attendees and supporters are encouraged to eliminate barriers and move forward with new and improved HIV mobilization, prevention, and care strategies that ultimately strengthen the African American MSM community.

This conference is unique in that it is the only one of its kind in the nation that specifically focuses on African American MSM and HIV/AIDS. In the United States, African Americans continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS in spite of only representing 12% of the total population (CDC). More alarming, most infections are African American MSM. In January 2007, the conference occurred in Charlotte, North Carolina where more than 200 persons attended and 42 workshops that were offered. When asked if they felt that the conference increased knowledge, practicality, and networking opportunities, 90% of those who responded agreed.

During this extraordinary conference in 2008, participants can choose to attend a number of institutions, workshops, roundtable discussion groups, and poster sessions to gain new insights or information about trends, studies, interventions strategies, research, or other topics. This conference also provides attendees excellent opportunities for establishing collaborations between service providers, creating or improving networks with other organizations, sharing strategies that work, and improving prevention efforts for African American MSM overall.

Organizations, corporations, and other groups interested in supporting this unique endeavor can submit or provide sponsorships, in-kind services, volunteers, and donations.

For individuals interested in sharing or presenting information that will directly impact African American MSM, abstracts for institutes, workshops, roundtables, and posters are being accepted for review. For more information about this conference or NAESM, visit www.naesmonline.org.

National Latino Hispanic AIDS Leadership Summit

Why are we creating a National Latino AIDS Agenda?

HIV/AIDS continues at unabated levels in the Latino community. HIV/AIDS continues to devastate Latinios/Hispanics across the United States, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Latinos are the fastest growing population in the United States and the second most affected by HIV and AIDS in both incidence and prevalence. According to the CDC, by the end of 2005 more than 77,000 Latinos/Hispanics have died from HIV/AIDS. The facts published by the CDC last year for infections and AIDS cases in 2004 should give anyone deep concern. Latinos are three times more likely than Whites to be HIV positive or to have an AIDS diagnosis. Latinos account for 18% of the deaths to date but are 14% of the U.S. population. What is being done at the local, state or federal level to change the continued doubt and fear this epidemic is continuing to inflict on our community?

We must join together as a community to develop an agenda that will represent our definition of what the underlying problems are and to suggest and to prioritize the changes that we see as necessary to reverse this epidemic of indifference. We need to set our Latino AIDS agenda for action. Then the public health establishment and elected officials can be educated about the whole Latino community and HIV/AIDS.

The working process is set to achieve a National Latino/Hispanic AIDS Action Leadership Summit on January 29-30, 2008. For more information and a partial listing of participating organizations visit: www.latinoAIDSagenda.org

Community Calendar 2008

Upcoming Events and Dates to Keep in Mind

January

- Th. 1/24 - Su. 1/27 2008 National African American MSM Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS "Breaking Barriers, Moving Forward", National AIDS Education and Services for Minorities, Inc (NAESM), Oakland, CA www.naesmonline.org
- Tu. 1/29 - W. 1/30 National Latino Hispanic AIDS Leadership Summit; Washington Plaza Hotel, 10 Thomas Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20005; To register online, visit www.latinoaidsagenda.org; For questions, contact Stephanie Pena at spena@aidsagenda.org or at 212-675-3288, ext. 351

February

- Tu. 2/7 African American AIDS Awareness Day; For more information, link to www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/days

March

- Su. 3/2 - Sa. 3/8 The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS; For more information, contact The Balm In Gilead at www.thebalmingilead or 888-225-6243
- M. 3/10 National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, For more information, link to www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/days
- Th. 3/20 National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day; For more information, link to www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/days

June

- W. 6/11 - Sa. 6/14 HIV Prevention Leadership Summit; Detroit, MI; For more information, send e-mail to conferences@nmac.org or call 202-483-6622; abstracts due 1/10/08
- F. 6/27 National HIV Testing Day

August

- M. 8/3 - Su. 8/8 XVII International AIDS Conference 2008, Mexico City, Mexico; Theme: Universal Action Now; Abstracts accepted through February 19, 2008.