

Get Screened Oakland: The Highlights

Group formed to address HIV and STD issues as they relate to Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)

(January 8, 2009) Representatives from AIDS Project East Bay, Pacific Center, Downtown Youth Center, AIDS Healthcare Foundation, La Clinica, Asian Health Services, Alameda County Office of AIDS, and Get Screened Oakland met to plan follow-up events and forums about issues affecting the local MSM community in Oakland.

Since attending the pre-World AIDS Day Men's Forum on HIV in November 2007, Get Screened Oakland has been collaborating with a group of representatives from area HIV service organizations to review service needs of men who have sex with men in the East Bay/Greater Alameda County community. As part of this work, members of Get Screened Oakland staff visited the Magnet Center, a storefront STD/HIV community clinic and arts and services center that is located in the Castro section of San Francisco.

"Magnet," which is operated under the aegis of San Francisco AIDS Foundation, is an alternative drop-in center program targeting men who have sex with men in the greater San Francisco West Bay community. Billed as a community cultural center, a Magnet-style center has been discussed and proposed for Oakland. For more information about the MSM informal working group, contact Rev. Dr. Damon Powell, 510-238-7070.

San Francisco HIV community providers given an Update on Get Screened Oakland

(January 9, 2009) Get Screened Oakland participated in an informational seminar about routine testing. Rev. Dr. Damon Powell, Get Screened Oakland Outreach Coordinator, delivered a presentation entitled *Can We Do It? Municipal Scale Ups & Routine Testing as a Modern Response to the Current Epidemic*.

In June 2007, Oakland, California became the second city in the United States to develop a municipal response to HIV. Since then, Los Angeles, California and Bronx, New York have launched similar programs.

In his presentation, Dr. Powell described the key components of the "GSO Model": the buy-in of elected officials and HIV community leaders; flexible regulations guiding HIV testing and/or HIV screening; social marketing resources; and expanded community partnerships with private sector partners. Following his presentation, Rev. Dr. Powell answered questions from seminar participants about the "ok-ness" of expanded testing and its utility in a community, such as San Francisco, California. Some argue that data from San Francisco suggest that expanded testing does not have a bearing on the local epidemic overall. Regardless of the specifics, Rev. Dr. Powell stressed the importance of knowing one's status, saying that it is a critical first step in addressing today's epidemic.

The seminar was part of the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS) - Technology, Information & Exchange (TIE) core Community Town Hall Series.

National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS meets with Mayor Dellums

(January 27, 2009) Oakland Mayor Ronald V. Dellums met with C. Virginia Fields, President and CEO of the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS (NBLCA), whose headquarters are in New York City (NYC), and Get Screened Oakland staff. Also in attendance at the meeting were Ronald Knox, Yvette Radford and Melanie Tervalon, MD, of Kaiser Permanente and Rev. Dr. J. Alfred Smith and Gloria Cox Crowell of Allen Temple Baptist Church. This meeting represented the second visit to Oakland for the New York City-based AIDS education and advocacy organization. It was convened in order to discuss the mission of NBLCA and the viability of their proposal to develop an affiliate of the organization in Oakland.

Established in 1987, NBLCA was the first HIV/AIDS initiative for Black clergy and civic and elected leaders in the United States. In addition to its NYC headquarters, NBLCA has eight affiliates throughout the country. Its affiliates conduct leadership mobilization efforts to combat HIV disease.

Mayor Dellums welcomed NBLCA's interest in Get Screened Oakland and provided an overview of some of Get Screened Oakland's accomplishments. The following were among the achievements he noted:

- Organizing the first-ever Faith Leaders Summit on HIV and Cancer
- Ongoing collaboration with The Balm in Gilead
- Implementation of an ongoing social marketing campaign
- Active participation in organizing and conducting the Care Fair and Family Day at Eastmont Town Center and other public-venue HIV testing programs
- Convening the Alameda Countywide Clinic and Hospitals HIV Screening Collaboration and working jointly with several private sector partners, including Kaiser Permanente, Gilead Sciences, San Francisco Foundation, and Levi Strauss.

Mayor Dellums stressed the early success of the Get Screened Oakland initiative and his desire to assist other local municipalities that are interested in beginning similar initiatives. During the discussion, Mayor Dellums, Ms. Fields, and staff members of NBLCA and GSO identified opportunities to build upon the success of Get Screened Oakland and to work together to encourage other communities to get involved on a municipal level. Because Oakland was ahead of many communities in building a municipal response, all agreed that there was opportunity for the city to collaborate with NBLCA on developing best practices to share with other communities.

Collaborative Community Planning Council meets to plan agenda

(January 28, 2009) The Collaborative Community Planning Council (CCPC) had its first meeting of the year. It was primarily a planning meeting to discuss the calendar for the year, impending agenda items, and organizational modifications for the Planning Council in the coming year.

The meeting was called to order by CCPC Co-Chair Roosevelt Mosby. After the minutes from the last meeting were approved, Ron Chavez of Grupo Fremont VIP spoke briefly about his organization's successful 2008 and its future plans. Angel Fabian, Chair of the CCPC Prevention Committee, led a lively discussion about needs and issues regarding prevention. Michael Lee from the Alameda County Office of AIDS provided an overview of the current Case Managers Manual, which was produced by his office. He explained that recommended changes and modifications to procedures were still being made to the document. Fredrica Robinson, CPCC Co-Chair, gave an overview and led a discussion regarding proposed changes to the by-laws, and Patricia Sweetwine, CPCC Coordinator, outlined plans for the annual retreat and the co-chair nomination process. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

USCA Will Come to the Bay Area October 29-31, 2009

(January 29, 2009) The National Minority AIDS Council has selected San Francisco as the location for this year's U.S. Conference on AIDS. Representatives of Alameda County Office of AIDS and Get Screened Oakland, among others, are members of the Host Committee. The Committee met at the Asian Pacific Islander Wellness Center to discuss formation of work groups and fundraising for the conference.

The Host Committee has set a calendar for its meetings in the coming months. The dates are as follows:

- Thursday, February 25
- Thursday, March 26
- Thursday, April 30
- Thursday, May 28

The time of these meetings will be 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. The location will alternate between San Francisco and the East Bay. The meeting on February 25 will be in the East Bay.

This year's USCA will be held at the Hilton Towers and Conference Center. One of the items that the Host Committee will be discussing in the upcoming meetings is the theme for the conference. If you have an idea for a theme, submit your suggestion to Adriann McCall, Program Manager of Get Screened Oakland. Below is a list of USCA themes of the past:

- 2008 USCA – Looking Back, Moving Forward (Miami Beach, FL)
- 2007 USCA – One Family, One Voice, One Spirit (Palm Springs, CA)
- 2006 USCA – Rejuvenate, Revitalize, Remember (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
- 2005 USCA – The Power of One – Make a Difference! (Houston, TX)
- 2004 USCA – We the People (Philadelphia, PA)

Oakland Community News

HIV on the Weekend Agenda for Obama Inauguration Attendees

Mayor Ronald V. Dellums and staff of Get Screened Oakland were in Washington, DC for a set of HIV meetings during the weekend that preceded President Obama's Inauguration. This article gives a brief report of the events attended.

January 17, 2009

Flowers Heritage Foundation's Board Chair, Hillary Flowers, and her husband, Eric Flowers, CEO of Ramsell Holding Corporation, hosted a pre-inaugural dinner at Smith and Wollensky's restaurant in downtown Washington, DC. Joining the Flowers family were representatives from AIDS Action, The AIDS Institute, the National Latino Commission on AIDS, the American Bar Association HIV Coordinating Committee, the Urban Coalition of HIV/AIDS Prevention Services, the HHS Office of Minority Health, the DC Department of Health's HIV/AIDS Administration, the Miami-Dade Office of HIV Services, the Office of Oakland Mayor Ronald V. Dellums, and Get Screened Oakland. Christopher Bates, Director of the Office of HIV/AIDS Policy at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Greg Edwards, Executive Director of the Flowers Heritage Foundation, were also on hand for the conversations and the dinner.

After sharing in the excitement of the upcoming presidential inauguration, Greg Edwards and Eric Flowers introduced the dinner guests to the work of Flowers Heritage Foundation and that of Ramsell Holding Corporation.

Flowers Heritage Foundation is a relatively young family foundation dedicated to addressing unmet needs in HIV and bridging the gap in community access to lifesaving HIV medicines. Ramsell Holding Corporation is a private sector partner of and parent company to four healthcare-related businesses. The four businesses are an information technology company, a real estate management operation and two investment-business entities in the fight against AIDS, one of which is a pharmacy benefits management service that manages several AIDS drug programs, including California's AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP).

The next item on the evening's informal agenda was a brief discussion of the potential components of then President-Elect Obama's HIV/AIDS agenda and highlights from the agenda-setting process for the development of the National AIDS Strategy, which was discussed last month in the Get Screened Oakland's newsletter. All agreed that the new administration has a wonderful opportunity to build upon the successes of the past, such as those of the Flowers Heritage Foundation's Don't Turn Your Back on AIDS program and the ADAP "Bridge the Gap" program. The evening ended with an exchange of ideas about

the best way to complete the national strategy.

January 18, 2009

It's Sunday evening and pre-inaugural ball time. Gowns and tuxedos, bowties and cummerbunds, high heels, dangling earrings, and monogrammed cufflinks became the "style" of the night. Washington had gathered to honor twenty-five torchbearers, religious leaders, educators, and lifelong Civil Rights activists.

Ms. Pernessa Seele, CEO of The Balm In Gilead, welcomed more than 1,200 guests to the first-ever African American Church Inaugural Ball: We've Come This Far by Faith with the following words: "We are honored to present the once in a lifetime keepers of the flame award to 25 extraordinary individuals who represent a diverse discipline of knowledge and achievement. These dedicated men and women represent those whose struggles and achievements paved the way to this commemorative moment, to the inauguration of the first African American President, Barack Obama, and our first family. The number of those who have made sacrifices for our opportunities is legion. However, tonight we pay tribute to those 25 men and women who represent the best of us and who have carried the torch and kept the flame."

Held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in downtown Washington, DC, the Ball was chaired by Rev. Dr. Franklyn Richardson II, Senior Pastor of the Grace Baptist Church in Mt. Vernon, NY. It was hosted by Master of Ceremonies Mr. Roland S. Martin, CNN Commentator and Author of Listening to the Spirit Within: 50 Perspectives on Faith and Speak Brother! A Black Man's View of America.

The Ball festivities began with a photo montage highlighting African American history in the United States. Now available on The Balm in Gilead Web site, the montage included images of the historic election of President Obama, which were displayed to the background sound of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which is often referred to as the African American national anthem. The Ball provided the occasion to honor twenty-five heroes and sheroes, who were recognized as "Keepers of the Flames." Those honored were a Who's Who of the African American community: Dr. Maya Angelou, Dr. Marion Wright Edelman, Dr. John Hope Franklin, Dr. Dorothy Height, Honorable Alexis Herman, Rev. Jessie Jackson, Jr, Congressman John Lewis, Rev. Joseph Lowry, General Colin Powell, Rev. Della Reese, Rev. Al Sharpton, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Those presenting the awards included Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Bennett College President Julianne Malveaux, Actress Sheryl Lee-Ralph, and Morehouse President D. Robert Franklin.

Musical presentations entertained guests throughout the evening. The performers included the Grace Baptist Church Choir, Violinist Daniel Davis, the all-female jazz ensemble Sage, and Soloists Rev. Wintley Phipps and Miss Jessye Norman.

Ms. Seele gave the evening's keynote remarks and reminded those in attendance of the need to stay vigilant in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In addition, Ms. Seele gave highlights from both the domestic and international work of The Balm in Gilead and reflected on the continuing need to work hard in order to ensure that the African American community as a whole included HIV and AIDS on its agenda. A videotape montage reinforced Ms. Seele's comments and further informed guests of the work of The Balm in Gilead.

The Balm in Gilead is a national nonprofit organization, which endeavors to provide health education and service delivery systems within African American Church denominations to address HIV/AIDS and other health concerns that affect African Americans. More information about the African American Church Inaugural Ball can be found at www.balmingilead.org.

January 19, 2009

More than 100 HIV services providers, HIV activists, and policymakers attended the *Our Place at the Table Inaugural Meeting*, a policy round table to discuss the implications of the presidential transition and the national AIDS agenda.

With these words, NMAC convened the meeting: "This January, we call on the new President to strengthen programming addressing the domestic HIV/AIDS crisis. Most notably, we ask the new Administration to support the establishment of a National AIDS Strategy, the need for which has never been greater. Indeed, re-evaluation of the HIV incidence data at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently revealed the 56,300 new HIV cases occurred in 2006 alone, which is

40 percent higher than previous estimates of 40,000 new cases annually. The annual incidence rate of new infections has not fallen in nearly two decades.”

The meeting agenda included the following: an overview of the election; an overview of the transition plans; a review of agendas of national advocacy organizations; and a discussion of next steps. In addition, Dr. David Holtgrave of Johns Hopkins University gave a special lunch presentation.

Actress Sheryl Lee-Ralph, a longtime HIV activist, was among the meeting attendees as were representatives from the Oakland community. Oakland representatives included staff from the following organizations: AIDS Project East Bay, Sexual Minority Alliance of Alameda County, and Get Screened Oakland.

During the morning session, the focus topics were the national AIDS strategy and the strategies suggested for the presidential administration transition. A number of organizations presented; they were AIDS Action, The AIDS Institute, the Asian and Pacific Islander Wellness Center, the Black Gay Men’s Advocacy Coalition, the Center for HIV Law and Policy, the Hispanic Federation, and the National Association of People with AIDS. The afternoon session focused on working with national HIV/AIDS organizations and included presentations from the following organizations: National AIDS Housing Coalition, National AIDS Funds, Asian and Pacific Islander Health Forum, National Association of People with AIDS, National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, HIV Medical Association and the Black AIDS Institute.

Following the day’s sessions, Paul Kawata, Executive Director of the National Minority AIDS Council, led a discussion about next steps and encouraged attendees to partner with the participating national organizations to build a consensus and movement in setting a new national agenda for HIV and AIDS. The policy roundtable concluded with an evening reception attended by more than 300 members of the HIV service and advocacy community who were in Washington, DC to participate in inaugural activities.

Words from the Community

Fighting AIDS in Communities of Color: An Action Agenda for the New President

In August 2008, nine of the leading national minority HIV/AIDS organizations along with representatives from faith- and community-based organizations that deliver HIV/AIDS services in communities of color throughout the United States, its territories, and Native American reservations convened to develop public policy addressing the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS in minority communities nationwide. What follows are the seven recommendations developed during the meeting.

1. Rapidly put in place a National AIDS Strategy.
2. Collect better data and HIV/AIDS in communities of color.
3. Strengthen HIV prevention efforts.
4. Make knowledge of HIV status the norm in communities of color.
5. Ensure universal access to high-quality HIV treatment and care.
6. Address the social determinants of HIV risk and vulnerability.
7. Help communities mobilize to fight HIV/AIDS.

Community Calendar 2009
Upcoming Events and Dates to Keep in Mind

February

- W. 2/4 Delta Sigma Theta Black AIDS Awareness Mini Health Summit; Spoul Hall, UC Berkeley Campus, Berkeley, CA. For more information, contact Tonya D. Love of CAL-PEP at 510-697-7453.
- Th. 2/5 Sistahs Getting Real About HIV/AIDS Forum—an African American AIDS Awareness Day Commemoration, Oakland City Hall; :005-8:00 p.m. For more information, contact CDAGroup@aol.com
- Sa. 2/ 7 African American AIDS Awareness Day
- Sa. 2/7 Alameda County African American Awareness Day Commemoration; Dorsey's Locker, 5817 Shattuck, Oakland, CA; 8:00-11:30 p.m. For more information, e-mail Shelley Stinson of Alameda County Office of AIDS Administration at shelley.stinson@acgov.org.
- Tu. 2/17 Oakland Mayor's Model City Summit on Women: Enlighten, Engage, Enpower; Oakland Marriott Hotel, 12th and Broadway, Oakland, CA; 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. For more information, contact Trina Barton at 510-238-3141.

March

- Su. 2/1-Su. 2/8 Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of HIV/AIDS
For more information, go to The Balm in Gilead Web site at www.balmingilead.org.
- Tu. 3/10 National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- W. 3/11 International Women's Day
- F. 3/20 National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day