

## Get Screened Oakland: The Highlights

### **Alameda County Office of AIDS and Get Screened Oakland attend CDC Partnership in Action Meeting**

(May 29-30, 2008) Ron "Kabir" Hypolite, Director of Alameda County Office of AIDS, and Marsha A. Martin, Director of Get Screened Oakland, were among the more than 100 persons invited to attend the meeting, "Heightened National Response (HNR) to the HIV/AIDS Crisis among African Americans," which was sponsored by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Held in Atlanta, Georgia under the leadership of Medical Epidemiologist Dr. Madeline Sutton, CDC, the meeting served as a follow-up to a 2007 gathering of influential leaders from the African American community. At that meeting, attendees representing such varied sectors as community- and faith-based organizations, entertainment, media, sports, and public health—developed a four-point strategy for heightening the response to HIV/AIDS among African Americans across the U.S.

The HNR strategy has four key goals:

- 1) Expand the reach of prevention services
- 2) Increase opportunities for diagnosing and treating HIV
- 3) Develop new, effective prevention interventions
- 4) Mobilize broader community action

During the 2007 meeting, attendees were asked to assist in building a response that is not only "heightened" but also sustainable. This assistance was to include the mass mobilization of the African American community in order to end the "debilitating stigma of HIV/AIDS."

Many of those attending the 2007 HNR launch meeting agreed to get involved by offering HIV testing, sponsoring health fairs, airing public service announcements about HIV, and writing op-eds and newspaper articles about HIV. This year's meeting reviewed the successes and challenges that have been encountered in working to achieve the HNR goals.

Dr. Kevin Fenton opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and giving an update on HNR. Last year's attendees, he reported, included leaders from the Coalition of 100 Black Women, 100 Black Men, Jack and Jill, the National Urban League, the Links, UPS, several Historically Black Colleges and Universities, black mega-churches, and large corporations, among others. Many of the organizations that had representation at the 2007 meeting returned for the follow-up, and there were also some new members: the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Black Entertainment Television, the Association of Black Mayors, and the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame Foundation.

The Honorable Donna Christensen, Delegate from the U.S. Virgin Islands and Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Health Braintrust, joined the meeting by phone. She urged attendees to think outside of the box in order to bring solutions to the pervasive problem of HIV in the African American community. She recalled meetings held ten years ago at the CDC for the purpose of discussing the then emerging crisis of HIV in the African American community. Those discussions led to the creation of the Minority AIDS Initiative. She asked that an outcome of the current meeting be to provide the members of the CBC, along with their

colleagues in the Hispanic and Asian Pacific Island Caucuses with new ideas and recommendations for legislative solutions.

CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding was not able to participate at the meeting in person; however, she did speak to the gathering by video message. She asked that this year's meeting seek to identify and overcome the obstacles to expanded testing and increased awareness. Christopher Bates, Acting Director of the Office of HIV/AIDS Policy at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services challenged attendees to do more and not to let obstacles discourage them from generating the same degree of momentum that was reached at last year's meeting.

Following these opening remarks, the attendees were divided into five working groups: Media, Education, Faith-based, Entertainment, and Health and Government.

Mr. Hypolite and Dr. Martin participated in the Health and Government group, which divided its time into two break out sessions: 1) Leadership Mobilization Campaigns and 2) Information and Education Campaigns.

During the first breakout session, representatives from Chicago and Houston—Lloyd Kelly of the Let's Talk, Let's Test Foundation, and Marlene McNeese Ward the City HIV Prevention Branch respectively—presented their city's local HIV campaigns. Phill Wilson, CEO of The Black AIDS Institute, moderated the session. He also presented an outline of the Black AIDS Mobilization initiative, which targets major national Black organizations, such as the NAACP, the National Association of Black Journalists, the National Association of Black Mayors, and the National Urban League.

In the second break out session, speakers presented campaign models from the ACT Campaign—Awareness, Communication, Testing, which is under development by the CDC. The showcased models have been tested in Detroit and Philadelphia.

For more information on the Heightened National Response, go to [www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/aa/resources/reports/pdf/heightenedresponse.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/aa/resources/reports/pdf/heightenedresponse.pdf).

### **Social Workers in AIDS meet to commemorate 20 years of service**

(May 22-25, 2008) Get Screened Oakland was invited to Washington, D.C. to participate in "HIV/AIDS 2008: The Social Work Response." This annual conference, which convenes social workers in HIV-related services, was supported in part by two Get Screened Oakland Supporters: Gilead Sciences and Abbott Laboratories.

This year, the conference brought together more than 500 social workers from across the U.S. to discuss effective strategies, programs, and interventions. It featured a leadership institute designed to engage attendees in dialogue about the need for new leaders and to encourage social workers to "step forward and assume a leadership role in the upcoming challenging times for people with HIV as there are more people living with HIV than ever before and dwindling resources."

It also included a workshop and leadership institute. The workshop was coordinated by Randall H Russell, Senior Manager of National Accounts at Gilead Sciences (and former Director of the Southern AIDS Coalition). The Leadership Institute consisted of three tracks: the History of Social Work Leadership in HIV; the Bones of Leadership from a Community, Regional, and National Perspective; and the Role of Planning in Leadership. The following individuals served as the core faculty for this Institute: Vincent J. Lynch, PhD of Boston College, who is the Founder of the Conference; Alan Rice, Co-Director of Social Work at St. Lukes-Roosevelt Hospital in New York; Russell Bennett, Executive Director of Collaborative Solutions in Alabama; and Marsha Martin, DSW, Director of Get Screened Oakland.

### **Team Get Screened Oakland Attends and Participates in LA County Forum**

(May 21, 2008) The Los Angeles County Office of AIDS Policy and Programs convened a meeting at the California Endowment in Los Angeles to re-invigorate LA's local response in the African American community. Entitled "State of the Epidemic: Community in Crisis – African Americans and HIV/AIDS," the meeting was coordinated by William Strain.

Mario Perez, Director of the LA County Office of AIDS Policy and Programs, presented the HIV epidemiological profile of LA

County. He also gave highlights of the county's service delivery system and its existing gaps.

The keynote speaker, Erylene Piper-Mandy, PhD, focused on the need for cultural competence in community-based HIV care. Beginning her remarks with an African proverb, *We can track the footprint, but we cannot catch the animal*, to highlight the difficulties in building an effective response to HIV, Dr. Piper-Mandy gave examples of problems in delivering culturally sensitive and competent care. She also gave illustrations of how missteps can result in bad care and a poor quality of service, not to mention a lack of treatment adherence and more no-shows at medical appointments. Dr. Piper-Mandy ended her remarks by raising two questions:

"Maybe we are using the wrong template," she began, "[but] do we know the right one to use?" She continued, "Let's be honest: the state of California has never been in the forefront of helping the black community handle any disease; do we think they can help now?"

The keynote was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Phill Wilson, CEO of The Black AIDS Institute. On the panel were Willis Edwards, NAACP Board Member and Producer; William King, MD, JD, Clinical Instructor for the Department of Infectious Disease, UCLA; and Marsha Martin, DSW, Director of Get Screened Oakland. Following the panel discussion, Mario Perez and Phill Wilson discussed next steps and encouraged attendees to commit to working together to finally address the health and service disparities in LA County.

## Oakland Community News

### **Congresswoman Barbara Lee brings CDC to West Oakland**

(May 9, 2008) Community members joined Congresswoman Barbara Lee in welcoming Dr. Julie Gerberding, Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to an Oakland forum entitled *From Prevention to Policy: Responses to HIV/AIDS in the African American Community*.

Congresswoman Lee, who is now serving her tenth year in the U.S. Congress as California's 9<sup>th</sup> District Representative, invited Dr. Gerberding to Oakland. She wanted to give the CDC Director an opportunity to hear firsthand from people who have been trying to address the ongoing crisis of HIV in the East Bay Community. Attending the forum were representatives from many of the community's AIDS service organizations, clinics, hospitals, and social service agencies, as well as professional associations and governmental agencies.

Congresswoman Lee opened the forum by sharing some of her experiences over the last decade working with the community to address HIV/AIDS—including declaring HIV disease a crisis in Alameda County. Rep. Lee discussed her collaborations with colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) to legislate and appropriate funds to address the crisis.

Stating that more needs to be done, she encouraged forum attendees to continue to work with her office in support of legislation and to attend the International AIDS Conference in Mexico City, where she will help to elevate the importance of addressing the epidemic within the black community with like-minded leaders and advocates from around the globe.

Rep. Lee then introduced Dr. Gerberding, who is no stranger to the Bay Area. At the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, Dr. Gerberding was working at San Francisco General Hospital as a specialist in infectious disease. The hospital was the first in the country to establish an "AIDS Ward."

In her remarks, Dr. Gerberding gave highlights of the efforts currently underway at the CDC to address the disparities in HIV, especially as they relate to African Americans. She highlighted the components of the heightened national response<sup>\*</sup>; discussed the national partnership program aimed at identifying new partners within the African American community; reviewed the expanded HIV screening in urban hospital emergency settings; and gave highlights from collaborations with leadership in the African American community. Dr. Gerberding concluded her remarks by pointing out that the CDC's budget has been flat funded for four years and encouraging everyone to help to identify new resources.

Following Dr. Gerberding's remarks, Ron "Kabir" Hypolite, Director of Alameda County Office of AIDS, moderated a panel discussion. Each of the six panelists covered an issue that is important to consider as communities and governments work to strengthen the HIV/AIDS response. Robert Williams of UCSF's Center for AIDS Studies discussed the HIV epidemic in African American Men who have Sex with Men; Marsha Martin of Get Screened Oakland discussed the importance of understanding HIV/AIDS data and what they reveal about trends in both the epidemic and the response; John Fowler of KTVU Newsroom, who was representing the private sector and the media, talked about the need to keep the issue of HIV relevant to funders and journalists; Naina Khanna, of WORLD, talked about the needs of women and Asian Pacific Islanders; and Ernest Hopkins of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation reviewed progress to date and challenges in going forward.

After these presentations, forum attendees asked questions of the panel and shared observations. The meeting ended with Congresswoman Lee thanking the panelists and encouraging Dr. Gerberding to take what she had heard back to her colleagues at the CDC and re-commit to addressing the concerns of African Americans in communities such as Oakland.

\*For more information on the Heightened National Response, see the opening article of this newsletter.

### **SMAAC brings protest to City Hall**

(May 20, 2008) Roosevelt Mosby, Executive Director of the Sexual Minority Alliance of Alameda County (SMAAC) and more than 30 young people marched on Oakland City Hall to bring attention to the need provide resources and services to greater Oakland's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and intersex youth and young adults. The participants' unscheduled and unannounced arrival initially raised concerns with City Hall security about the appropriateness of the "en masse" gathering/march.

Following raised tensions and raised voices, SMAAC members were invited to meet with the following individuals: Mayor Dellums' Chief of Staff David Chai; Leslie Littleton, Deputy Chief of Staff; Miquel Bustos, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs; VaShone Huff of Intergovernmental Affairs; Josie Camacho, Director of Constituent Services; and Marsha Martin and Adriann McCall of Get Screened Oakland.

During the meeting, Mayor Dellums' office staff learned about SMAAC's past efforts to compete for City and County funding and its recent funding cuts. According to Mr. Mosby, the City Hall visit stemmed from the Alliance's need to understand why its funding has been cut. Several participants from SMAAC programs stressed how important it is for the city to help SMAAC remain open and explained why the funding was needed.

Chief of Staff David Chai promised to look more closely at the concerns and to meet with SMAAC leaders to see what, if anything, Mayor Dellums' office can do.

## Voices of the Community

### EAT WELL

Janice L'Heureux, AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA)

- 1) Plan tomorrow's nutrition today by making meal and snack plans in advance.
- 2) Fuel your body throughout the day and eat light at night. Have a late-afternoon snack to prevent over-eating at dinnertime.
- 3) Drink water throughout the day, two liters (about 8 ½ cups) or more.
- 4) Pack healthy snacks when leaving the house; think fruit and a handful of nuts, or whole wheat crackers and a small bag of veggies.
- 5) Eat lean protein with every meal, about one to four ounces. Choose from fish, skinless poultry, tofu, beans, and red meat with no visible fat or that's 93% lean. Prepare by steaming, baking, broiling or grilling. In other words, no frying.
- 6) Dairy is good. Consume three servings a day of pasteurized, low-fat dairy, or soy products. Go for yogurt that has live active cultures if you have lactose intolerance. Try to find a product without high-fructose corn syrup.
- 7) Eat your vegetables! Enough to cover half of your plate at lunch and dinner.
- 8) Choose whole grains and complex carbohydrates—about two or three servings per meal. Carbs get a bad rap, but they are a major fuel source and should be neither ignored nor overdone.
- 9) Seek out heart-healthy fats like those found in fish, nuts, seeds, avocado, or flax. Remember, a little goes a long way when it comes to nuts and avocado, since they have high calorie counts for a small serving size.
- 10) Take charge of your own nutrition. Learn to make one recipe a month from scratch and read food labels so you know what you're eating.

*These guidelines for eating well appeared in a column by Benjamin Ryan in the May/June issue of "HIV Plus."*

## Other HIV News

### **HIV disease found to increase risk for certain cancers**

Since the introduction of antiretroviral therapy, there has been a dramatic decrease in AIDS-defining cancers like Kaposi's sarcoma and non-Hodgkin lymphoma among HIV-positive persons. However, a new study of 54,780 men and women living with HIV suggests that non-AIDS-defining cancers are increasing among this population.

More specifically, Hodgkin's disease was 18 times more common than in the general population, liver cancer seven times more common, lung cancer 3.6 times more common, melanoma (a skin cancer) and throat cancer were both three times more common, and colorectal cancer 2.4 times more common, reported Reuters on Yahoo! News.

But the most significant difference was seen in cases of anal cancer. According to the study, by 2003, it had become 59 times more common among HIV-infected people. Dr. Pragna Patel of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who led the study, said multiple factors may contribute to this elevated risk. For example, anal sex can spread the human papillomavirus (HPV), which is known to cause anal cancer. "[A]nal sex and how many times you have anal sex and how many sex partners you have—that all matters with regard to HPV infection," Dr. Patel told Reuters.

The study, which reviewed trends from 1992 to 2003, also found that HIV-positive men were at a lower risk for prostate cancer. Men with HIV infections are more likely to have lower testosterone levels, which could be protective against prostate cancer, the researchers explained.

Dr. Patel advised doctors who care for HIV-positive people to be aware of this increased risk for a range of cancer types, and consider screening.

According to Dr. Patel, the study was the largest analysis ever of cancer trends among people living with HIV in the United States. "The study was done because we all know that now people with HIV are living longer, and HIV is looking more like a chronic disease. So we wanted to look at one of the other very large chronic killers in America, cancer," she said.

The study is available online at <http://www.annals.org/cgi/content/full/148/10/728>.

*Source:* "Cancer risk soars in HIV-infected people: study"; Dunham, Will; Reuters; May 20, 2008.

### **Exercise, studies show, improves health of HIV-positive people**

A growing body of evidence suggests that exercise can do more than improve well-being for HIV-positive people. It can also help the immune system stave off illness and AIDS-wasting disease by increasing muscle mass and improving heart and lung endurance, *The Sacramento Bee* reported.

For example, a 2006 study by Massachusetts General Hospital found that exercise manages symptoms of "metabolic syndrome." According to *The Sacramento Bee*, as many as 45 percent of people living with HIV have this syndrome, which increases the risk of heart disease and diabetes. Findings from another study, by Columbia University, indicated that moderate exercise, in combination with antiretroviral drugs, led to improved nervous-system function and circulation.

Dr. Archana Maniar, an Infectious Disease Specialist and Assistant Professor at UC Davis, observed that HIV patients are no different from non-infected people; they need proper exercise. Because people now live longer with HIV, they "get diseases "everybody gets—diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, strokes," Dr. Maniar observed. "From that standpoint, exercise promotes their general wellness and increases their chances of avoiding those things.

He added, "Some HIV patients are concerned about being prone to complications if they exercise a lot, and I tell them that listening to their body is the key, just like for anyone else."

Many HIV-positive people who make exercise a regular part of their lives experience benefits not only to their physical health,



"For me, the effects are more psychological than biochemical," remarked Bob Katz, a member an HIV-positive cycling club in California. "Having a sense of self-worth, feeling comfortable in your body, is something exercising will do."

Source: "HIV and AIDS patients find exercise improves their health"; McManis, Sam;The Sacramento Bee; May 13, 2008

## **Community Calendar 2008**

### *Upcoming Events and Dates to Keep in Mind*

#### **June**

- Tu. 6/10 Faith Leaders Summit on HIV, Cancer, Health and Wellness; Marriott Hotel, 12th and Broadway, Oakland, CA. For More information contact Damon Powell, 510-238-3141.
- F. 6/13 21st Annual East Bay HIV Update; 8:15 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Samuel Merritt Educational Center, 400 Hawthorne Ave. For more information, call 510-204-3884.
- W. 6/11 - Sa. 6/14 HIV Prevention Leadership Summit; Detroit, MI; For more information, send e-mail to [conferences@nmac.org](mailto:conferences@nmac.org) or call 202-483-6622; abstracts due 1/10/08.
- Th. 6/19 – F. 6/20 Promoting Healthier Lives, HIV/AIDS Prevention Conference, Courtyard Marriott, Emeryville, CA. For more information, contact Shelley Stinson, Alameda County Office of AIDS, 510-873-6500
- F. 6/27 National HIV Testing Day & Get Screened Oakland First Anniversary Eastmont Health Fair, 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

#### **August**

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

#### **September**

- Th. 9/18 - 9/21 U.S. Conference on AIDS; Miami, FL. For more information, send e-mail to [conference@nmac.org](mailto:conference@nmac.org) or call 202-483-6622.