



# At the Crossroad in the Fight Against the Domestic HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the .U.S

Black AIDS Institute Report looks at opportunities and challenges in the fight against HIV/AIDS



**December 7, 2010, Los Angeles, CA**—With the AIDS epidemic approaching the end of its third decade, the last year witnessed important developments on the national AIDS response and in efforts to address the epidemic in Black America, says a new report released today by the Black AIDS Institute (The Institute). At the Crossroads, the 2010 State of AIDS in Black America report highlights of what proved to be an eventful year, placing particular emphasis on the key challenges that remain for the AIDS response in Black America

## **Making a Plan: Progress on a National AIDS Strategy**

Although the U.S. government will only contribute foreign AIDS assistance to countries that have a national strategic AIDS plan; America never had a strategic plan to fight its domestic epidemic. That all changed in July when the Obama Administration released the country's first National AIDS Strategy

According to the report, lacking clear targets, the country's AIDS efforts have too often been unaccountable, fragmented and

insufficiently strategic. Without a clear roadmap, federal agencies often failed to coordinate with each other, unnecessarily duplicating effort and missing critical opportunities. The report provides an overview of the NHAS and provides insights on how the report potentially impacts Black communities

Release of the National HIV/AIDS strategy is not be the end of the road for us, but rather only the beginning,” says Phill Wilson, President and CEO of the Black AIDS Institute. “Black Americans have a greater stake than any other group in a successful national AIDS response, and it is critical that Black advocates and stakeholders remain engaged as the new strategy is released, implemented and monitored. At the end of the day, the strategy will be meaningful only if it leads to concrete positive change in the national fight against AIDS, including reductions in new HIV infections and AIDS deaths

The report provides an update on the status of the CDC’s Act Against AIDS Initiative, a five-year, multi-faceted communication campaign to reduce new infections and refocus attention on the domestic epidemic. Remarkably, it is the federal government’s first national HIV education campaign since the 1980s, a clear indication of the loss of momentum in the domestic AIDS response that has long been documented and decried. According to public opinion surveys released by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, visibility, sense of urgency and personal urgency about AIDS has fallen considerably in recent years

A key component of the CDC initiative is the Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative (AALI), which seems to harness the strength and solidarity of the Black community to combat HIV. The Leadership Initiative is a \$10 million, five-year partnership between CDC and 14 of the nation’s leading Black organizations. CDC support builds capacity at these influential organizations to mainstream AIDS in Black America and to mobilize the nationwide constituencies of these 14 groups to become engaged in national and local AIDS efforts. Each of these groups represents expanded infrastructure to fight HIV/AIDS in Black communities

The report concludes, 2009-10 was a year of important achievements in the domestic fight against AIDS – the first such year in a long time. But the year also highlighted key challenges. AIDS funding remains stagnant, and the historic federal budget deficit will make major additional funding increases difficult to achieve. Meanwhile, the epidemic has largely disappeared from the front pages and the television newscasts, undermining AIDS awareness and impeding efforts to mobilize communities

AIDS media coverage may have declined somewhat,” says Wilson. “But, sadly, AIDS isn’t going away. The epidemic” remains one of the preeminent threats to the health and well being of Black communities across the country. In moving forward, Black HIV/AIDS advocates must continue to vigilant in keeping the unique issues facing Black America at the top of the national agenda

The Report concludes with both recommendations for the President and his administration, as well suggestions to how individuals can get involved in fighting the AIDS epidemic a personal, community and societal level

### About the Black AIDS Institute

Founded in 1999, the Black AIDS Institute is the only national HIV/AIDS think tank in the United States focused exclusively on Black people. The mission of the Institute is to stop AIDS in Black communities by engaging and mobilizing traditional Black institutions leaders, celebrities, media organizations and clergy in efforts to confront HIV/AIDS. The Institute provides training and capacity building, disseminates information, interprets public and private sector HIV policies, and offers mobilization and advocacy from a uniquely and unapologetically Black point of view

For more information about the Black AIDS Institute go to [www.BlackAIDS.org](http://www.BlackAIDS.org)

To download a copy of the report, “*At the Crossroads: The State of AIDS In Black America, 2010*” please click [here](#)

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