

For Immediate release

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MILWAUKEE AGENCIES PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY

February 7, 2016, is National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD), a national HIV testing and treatment community mobilization initiative designed to encourage Blacks across the United States to get educated, get tested, get involved, and get treated, as HIV/AIDS continues to devastate Black communities. **In Milwaukee, agencies and organizations are hosting a free event at MATC, 700 W. State Street on February 8 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

While Blacks represent approximately 12% of the U.S. population, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that Blacks account for 47% of the nation's new HIV infections. In 2012, an estimated 14,102 Blacks were diagnosed with AIDS in the US, a number that has slowly decreased since 2008. By the end of 2011, an estimated 265,812 Blacks with an AIDS diagnosis had died in the US. In 2012, HIV was the 5th leading cause of death for all Blacks and the 5th leading cause of death for both Black men and Black women ages 35–44. Many of those who are infected with HIV are unaware of their status and may unknowingly transmit the virus to others. Special events such as press conferences, town hall meetings, health fairs, church services, community marches and rallies, candlelight vigils, and free HIV testing will be held throughout the nation.

In Milwaukee, agencies and organizations will be conducting free HIV testing using a rapid HIV test where results are obtained in 15 minutes. Free urine-based STI testing will also take place. Condom distribution, information on PreP and other prevention methods will be available, along with community resources tables with other health related and job training information. The first 50 people to get tested for both HIV and STI will receive a \$10 Walmart gift card.

“It’s time to mobilize and talk about this devastating disease so we can make a difference... and there’s no better time than now,” says Gina Allende, UMOS HIV program manager and lead agency coordinating the event.

Participating Milwaukee agencies and organizations include 16th Street Clinic, Greater Milwaukee Center, Diverse and Resilient, Inc., Milwaukee Health Services, Inc., Neighborhood House, Milwaukee Health Department, Planned Parenthood, Medical College of Wisconsin, LGBT Center Urban League, WRTP Big Steps and UMOS.

Now in its 16th year, NBHAAD organizers remain focused on all cities where Black communities are disproportionately impacted and the epidemic is not slowing. Some of these cities include Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Chicago, Illinois; Cleveland, Ohio; Dallas and Houston Texas; Detroit, Michigan; Los Angeles, Oakland and San Francisco, California; Miami, Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana; Jackson, Mississippi; Newark and Trenton, New Jersey; New York, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina; and Washington, D.C.

Several Black celebrities and national community leaders have served as the face and voice of this huge effort while encouraging thousands of Black communities to mobilize and do something that will be long-lasting in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Past spokespersons include: President Barack H. Obama (*during his time as Illinois Senator*), Congressman Elijah E. Cummings; Tony Dungy; Idris Elba; Kimberly Elise; Lance Gross; Hill Harper; Taraji P. Henson; Tom Joyner; Congresswoman Barbara Lee; Chris Bridges (aka Ludacris); Percy Miller (aka Master P); Tangi Miller; Patrick-Ian Polk; General Colin Powell; Sheryl Lee Ralph; Gloria Reuben; Romeo; Rev. Edwin Sanders; Travis Smiley; and Congresswoman Maxine Waters.

NBHAAD is directed, planned and organized by a group known as the Strategic Leadership Council (SLC) who partners with the CDC and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to mobilize communities and address specific issues in regards to local epidemics and best practices that are science based and will influence the course of HIV in Black communities across the country.

For more information on National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, visit: www.NationalBlackAIDSDay.org.

For more information on Milwaukee’s Black HIV Awareness Day Event on February 8, contact Gina Allende, UMOS at 414-389-6507 or gina.allende@umos.org

UMOS is a non-profit, advocacy organization that provides programs and services which improve the employment, educational, health and housing opportunities of under-served populations