



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

National Office - Washington, DC: 202-835-8373
Administrative Office – Tampa, FL: 813-974-2598

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Media Contact: Michelle Scavnicky, (813) 258-5929, MSCAVNICKY@THEAIDSINSTITUTE.ORG

The AIDS Institute Supports National Latino AIDS Awareness Day

Washington, DC – The AIDS Institute (TAI) is proud to support the fifth annual **National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (NLAAD), Monday, October 15, 2007.**

This special day marks an opportunity to increase awareness of the devastating and disproportionate effects of AIDS in the Latino community. NLAAD is also a day to encourage HIV testing and to push for support from public officials and religious leaders. While Latinos only make up about 14% of the U.S. population, they account for 19% of the AIDS cases in the U.S. since the start of the epidemic. In 2004, Latinos accounted for 20% of the new AIDS cases in the U.S. The Latino Commission on AIDS and the Hispanic Federation, in partnership with a variety of faith and community organizations, started NLAAD in 2003.

Anthony S. Fauci, M.D. Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases National Institutes of Health, commented. "On this day, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) pledges to continue working toward reducing the burden of HIV/AIDS in the Latino community in the United States. We commemorate everyone who has been lost to the disease and recognize those committed individuals who promote HIV/AIDS education and awareness in all communities." He continued, "One of NIAID's top priorities is to conduct and support HIV/AIDS research that can help improve the health of millions of people in the United States and around the world. Developing new interventions to combat HIV/AIDS requires involvement from all communities, particularly those most affected by the disease. We all have a role. To determine whether an HIV therapy, a vaccine or another prevention strategy works for everyone—including Latinos—men and women from all racial and ethnic backgrounds are needed as clinical trial volunteers and as supporters of those who are considering enrollment."

Dr. Gene Copello, Executive Director of The AIDS Institute, commented: "The AIDS Institute is honored to support this important day of public awareness and highlighting the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on the Latino community....we are committed to working with all communities to ensure sufficient responses from government and the private sector to the devastating health effects of the epidemic."

According to the NLAAD press release, Congress Members Hilda Solis and Nydia Velázquez, along with Latino/Hispanic community leaders released the CALL TO ACTION AND MOBILIZATION to address the HIV/AIDS emergency in Latino/Hispanic communities across the nation including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. With 120 organizations and individuals already signed on to the document, the release came in response to the health emergency caused by the accelerated growth of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Hispanic/Latino communities across the nation.

"I am proud to join today with advocates in the Latino community who are deeply committed to reversing the epidemic and to announce the Call to Action and Mobilization," said Congresswoman Solis. "We must not forget that Latinos continue to be disproportionately infected by HIV/AIDS. Increasing awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS is key, but in order to see results, it should be done in a culturally competent manner. I will continue to work in Congress to promote policies to improve the health and well-being of the Latino community."

Congresswoman Velázquez responds to the crisis stating, "It is clear that a discrepancy exists in the care that Latino/Hispanic families are receiving when it comes to HIV/AIDS. I have been especially concerned with the need to reverse this disturbing trend. To this end, I have been working with federal officials, state officials and community-based organizations, and pushing for coordinated solutions so that we can be confident that the needs of HIV patients here in the U.S. and in Puerto Rico are being met."

For more information on **National Latino AIDS Awareness Day**, Monday, October 15th,
Visit: NLAAD online at www.nlaad.org or these other important sites:

For federal information on NLAAD in Spanish, visit InfoSIDA.
To find an HIV Testing location near you, please visit www.hivtest.org

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For more information or to become involved, please contact The AIDS Institute at:
(202) 835-8373, or by email at: Info@theaidsinstitute.org

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through public policy research, advocacy and community education.
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