



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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THE AIDS INSTITUTE SUPPORTS NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT ON HIV/AIDS ISSUES IMPACTING WOMEN AND GIRLS

Washington, DC – March 10, 2007 marks the 2nd annual **National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day**. This day was established to raise awareness on the increasing impact of HIV/AIDS transmission on women and girls. Campaign organizers created an additional focus for this year's theme; **"Taking Action to Save Our Lives"**

The AIDS Institute supports this observance day, sponsored by the Office on Women's Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "This awareness day is very important as it symbolizes women and girls taking a stand on promoting major health issues and identifying the necessary steps to prevent them", explains Michelle Scavnicky, Director of Education for The AIDS Institute.

Dr. Julie Louise Gerberding, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention commented about this national observance: "More than 25 years have passed since HIV emerged, but it is still one of the top health concerns around the world. In addition, more and more women are infected and at risk. In fact, in 2006, nearly 18 million women worldwide 15 years of age and older, were living with HIV – an increase of more than a million from just two years before."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Women represent 26% of new diagnoses of HIV in 2005; High-risk heterosexual contact was the source of 80% of these newly diagnosed infections; Of the 127,150 women living with HIV/AIDS, 64% are African American, 19% White, 15% Hispanic, 1% Asian or Pacific Islander, and less than 1% were American Indian or Alaska Native.

Jamila Taylor, Global Policy Coordinator for The AIDS Institute noted, "AIDS is the leading cause of death for black women ages 25-34 in the United States. Something is seriously wrong with this picture. At this point, extreme galvanization of the black community is absolutely necessary to save our sisters. Black women with HIV feel alone and ostracized amongst their own people, just the thought of it brings tears to my eyes. These are our sisters and daughters...mothers and grandmothers. It is my hope that black leaders begin to address HIV/AIDS, instead of ignoring that it exists among our people. This day is an opportunity to acknowledge the incidence of this disease amongst women and invoke opportunities for empowerment within this population."

National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day intended to highlight the importance of HIV/AIDS education among women and girls and to stress the importance of knowing their HIV status as well as promote healthy behaviors that reduce the risk of HIV infection.

For more information about National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and related links please go to: www.theaidsinstitute.org Events Section

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

The AIDS Institute is a national nonprofit agency that promotes action for social change through public policy research, advocacy and education.