



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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For Immediate Release: 5.17.07

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THE AIDS INSTITUTE INTRODUCES THE WIN PROJECT: AN EFFORT THAT TRULY EMPHASIZES THE CRITICAL NEEDS FOR WOMEN IMPACTED BY HIV/AIDS

Washington, DC – MAY 17, 2007 marks the launch of a new program of The AIDS Institute entitled **The WIN Project-“Women Informing Now”**. The WIN Project represents an international and domestic effort that highlights areas of critical concern for women impacted by HIV/AIDS. The emphasis of the program is to direct women, minority, and family-centered resources around HIV/AIDS. In the process, we will educate Congress, the Administration, and communities about issues that pervade these populations.

"The WIN Project is strategically being introduced during National Women's Health Week to highlight and emphasize the importance of addressing the health needs of women and girls. The AIDS Institute will be working proactively to address these needs" explains Dr. Gene Copello, Executive Director for The AIDS Institute. "In addition, The AIDS Institute is delighted that Congresswomen Barbara Lee and Congresswomen Hilda Solis have agreed to participate as Honorary Co-Chairs of The WIN Project. Their leadership in the promotion of women's health issues has proved exemplary."

The WIN Project integrates three work areas important to the overall conceptualization which are education, policy analysis and research. The goals and focus of The WIN Project include: policy initiatives that involve the interests of women on the state, national, and global level, education and increased public awareness regarding the rising number of women with HIV/AIDS in the United States and worldwide, a broad communications and media strategy that will bring to the forefront issues specific to women impacted by HIV/AIDS, promotion of heightened awareness about the feminization of HIV/AIDS both domestically and abroad, the offering of recommendations as to the ways in which community, faith, and government leaders can help reduce HIV infection in women and girls, advocating for support programs to families currently stricken by the disease, and the development and distribution of models for local and state governments in the United States consistent with state laws mandating offices of women's health and women's health officers within departments of health.

Marylin Merida, board president of The AIDS Institute, stresses the fact that “Women need to be placed in the forefront when it comes to addressing their health needs. As family-focused providers, women tend to others’ needs before their own needs. It is clearly time for women to be a priority in addressing HIV/AIDS and The WIN Project will demonstrate that importance.”

Another major component of the Project is the development of a network of organizations to advise The AIDS Institute on women’s issues, and to assist in mobilizing communities to address policies related to women and girls impacted by HIV/AIDS. Organizations that work for the advancement of human rights, reproductive health, social justice, and HIV/AIDS were selected to broaden the scope of the WIN Project and to further the relationship between issues that have not been historically linked to HIV transmission among women and girls.

“Inviting such a diverse group of partners to work with us to address women’s health needs is a major factor for the program’s future success. Their expertise will enable us to provide a more comprehensive approach in the WIN project” states Michelle Scavnicky, Director of Education for The AIDS Institute.

According to UNAIDS, women represent almost half (48%) of all adults living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, and the number of women living with the disease continues to increase. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 76% of young women, ages 15-24 are HIV positive. Alternately, about 26% of those living with HIV in North America are women. These statistics outstandingly prove that efforts like the WIN Project are critical.

Jamila Taylor, Global Policy Coordinator for The AIDS Institute, asserts that “The WIN Project seeks to provide a gateway for other national and international organizations with the goal of addressing women’s issues within the policy arena. Because the AIDS epidemic is multi-sectoral amongst women, we will make vigorous efforts to address issues like child marriage, education, poverty, and gender-based violence. We hope that in the process, women will not only get the attention and services they need, but also a sense of security and empowerment to help them conquer this dreadful disease.”

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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.