



THE AIDS INSTITUTE

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THE AIDS INSTITUTE LAUNCHES: NATIONAL HIV/AIDS AND AGING AWARENESS DAY DURING THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE ON AIDS 2008

Washington, DC – September 18, 2008 marks the launch of a new national awareness initiative of The AIDS Institute entitled **National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day (NHAAAD)**. This national campaign will highlight the complex issues related to HIV prevention, care and treatment for aging populations in the United States.

It is the goal of the campaign to highlight challenges such as the need for prevention, research, data and medical understanding of the aging process and the impact of HIV/AIDS. There are important groups that will be highlighted in this work: (1) the growing number of people living with HIV and AIDS who are aging with the disease or are already over 50 at the time of diagnosis; (2) the increasing percentage of our population that needs to protect itself from HIV infection, including the growing baby boomer population; and (3) the increasing numbers of grandparents becoming the primary custodial parent for children who have lost their parent(s) to HIV/AIDS. These groups have a long list of unique challenges and issues and it is the hope of this campaign to bring all of those to light. The AIDS Institute will be working closely with other national partners and community organizations to hold awareness events and activities that promote understanding, awareness and action.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 2006 persons aged 40 and older accounted for approximately 35% of new HIV infections.

In 2005, the Centers for Disease Control reported persons aged 50 and older accounted for:

- 15% of new HIV/AIDS diagnoses
- 24% of persons living with HIV/AIDS (increased from 17% in 2001)
- 19% of all AIDS diagnoses
- 29% of persons living with AIDS
- 35% of all deaths of persons with AIDS

The rates of HIV/AIDS among persons 50 and older were 12 times as high among Blacks and 5 times as high among Hispanics compared to Whites.

The above numbers highlight the need for HIV prevention, care and treatment awareness for the aging population in this country. The AIDS Institute believes that education is the key to curbing the spread of HIV for older Americans and ensuring the best possible care and treatment for those already living with HIV infection.

“National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day is being introduced during Healthy Aging Month in September and will be held annually. The AIDS Institute will work throughout the year to bring a heightened awareness of all the issues related to HIV/AIDS and aging to a broad audience” explains Dr. Gene Copello, Executive Director for The AIDS Institute. Copello goes on to say, “We are proud to announce that this campaign is further supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of HIV/AIDS Policy, and www.aids.gov. We look forward to working with the other awareness day organizations to keep the HIV/AIDS on the front burner of the domestic agenda”.

EDUCATIONAL FORUM AND LAUNCH

The launch of this important day will be during The United States Conference on AIDS (USCA) and scheduled for September 18, 2008 at the Ft. Lauderdale Convention Center in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. As a national partner of the conference, The AIDS Institute is hosting an educational institute from 10:30AM to 5:30PM on Thursday, September 18, 2008. A press conference will be held at 12:00 Noon, during the institute, to announce the launch of the 1st annual **National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day**.

The day long institute will focus on three specific panel presentations. The first panel will include experts from diverse backgrounds that will present relevant and compelling data that exists for individuals impacted by HIV/AIDS, living with HIV/AIDS and the aging process with specific emphasis on those over 50 and individuals over 50 at risk of contracting HIV infection. In addition, the panel will discuss potential risk factors (i.e., sex, drug use, lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS) associated with HIV, the impact of race, ethnicity, and gender, and highlight current prevention and intervention programs that address the target population. Finally, the panel will emphasize the need for future prevention and intervention research as appropriate.

The focus of the next panel is to demonstrate the unique treatment needs of the individual living with HIV/AIDS, examine the healthcare needs of the HIV and aging population, and emphasize the need for further medical research.

The final panel will discuss social barriers (i.e., ageism, stigma, discrimination, lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS, misconceptions, underestimation of risk, misdiagnosis) that exists for older adults infected with HIV/AIDS, keeping them from becoming infected as well as highlight the need for future social research.

The AIDS Institute will facilitate discussion of next steps and action items in regard to heightening awareness among the aging population as it relates to HIV/AIDS. In addition, The AIDS Institute will introduce its partners in this effort and distribute materials relevant to the National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day initiative including tool kits, press releases, posters, and media packets.

To access National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day toolkit materials, go to:
www.theaidsinstitute.org Events Section / Awareness Days

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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 and nonpartisan agency that promotes action for social change
through public policy research, advocacy and education.*