

# NEWS RELEASE

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## NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY OBSERVED FEB. 7 Communities Nationwide Hold Events to Raise Awareness

February 7, 2007 marks the seventh annual observance of **National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD)**. This national mobilization effort is designed to encourage African Americans across the United States and Territorial Areas to **get educated, get tested, get involved and get treated** for HIV/AIDS, as it continues to devastate Black communities. Special events such as free HIV/AIDS testing, prayer breakfasts, town hall meetings and memorial services will be held throughout the country.

While African Americans represent approximately 13 percent of the U.S. population, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that the group accounts for almost half (49%) of the nation's AIDS cases. According to the National Center for Health Statistics *2006 Report*, HIV/AIDS is one of the top 10 leading causes of death for African Americans; and in the same year African Americans accounted for more than half (54 percent) of estimated new HIV infections in the United States.

"Statistics show that African Americans have been disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS since the epidemic's beginning some 25 years ago," says Dr. John Robertson, *Executive Director* of **National Black Alcoholism and Addictions Council**, one of the lead organizations for NBHAAD. "If we increase the dialogue and get everyone involved, we will be able to galvanize our communities to take action and stop the spread of HIV/AIDS."

While NBHAAD is a nationwide effort, organizers have made a Call to Action for the 26 cities with the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS for African Americans to host a "**RE-Sound the Alarm**" Town Hall Meeting to ensure that Black communities realize that the epidemic is not slowing; it is picking up steam in certain parts of the

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country. These cities include **New York, NY; Washington, DC; Miami, FL; Philadelphia, PA; Chicago, IL; Atlanta, GA; Baltimore, MD; Los Angeles, CA; Houston, TX; San Francisco, CA; Dallas, TX; Detroit, MI; New Orleans, LA; Memphis, TN; Boston, MA; St. Louis, MO; Virginia Beach, VA; Orlando, FL; Jacksonville, FL Columbia, SC; Tampa, FL; Baton Rouge, LA; Cleveland, OH; Richmond, VA; Charlotte, NC; and San Diego, CA.**

“NBHAAD is grateful to have celebrities and community leaders lend their name, voice and time to serve as spokespeople for this important day,” said Evans. “We are currently producing public service announcements with several to be aired in advance of February 7<sup>th</sup> on the website.”

Among celebrities and those with a significant presence in Black America lend their name to this national mobilization campaign, to date include: Soldier and Statesman **Colin Powell**; Recording Artist **Pattie LaBelle**; Groundbreaking Original Series **Noah’s Arc Cast**; U.S. Congressman **Elijah E. Cummings**; Indianapolis Colts Head Coach **Tony Dungy**; U.S. Congresswoman **Eddie Bernice Johnson**; U.S. Congressman **Kendrick P. Meek**; Hip Hop Artist **Lil Bow Wow**; U. S. Congressman **Charles P. Rangel**; and U.S. Congresswoman **Maxine Waters**, to name a few.

NBHAAD is directed, planned and overseen by seven national organizations: Alliances for Quality Education, Inc. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Healthy Black Communities, Inc., Jackson State University – Mississippi Urban Research Center, My Brother’s Keeper, National Black Alcoholism & Addictions Council, and the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS. This group is commonly referred to as the Strategic Leadership Council.

For more information on **National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 2007**, please visit the website at [www.blackaidsday.org](http://www.blackaidsday.org).

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