

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

What is National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day?

National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, February 7th of every year, is a national HIV testing and treatment community mobilization initiative targeted at Blacks in the United States and the Diaspora. There are four specific focal points: education, testing, involvement, and treatment. **Educationally**, the focus is to get Blacks educated on the basics of HIV/AIDS in their local communities. **Testing** is at the core of this initiative, as it is hoped that Blacks will mark February 7th of every year as their annual or bi-annual day to get tested for HIV. This is for those who are sexually active and those at high risk of contracting HIV. When it comes to community and organization leadership, getting Blacks **involved** to serve is another key focus. And lastly, for those living with HIV or newly testing positive for the virus, getting them connected to **treatment** and care services becomes paramount. To learn more go to:
<http://www.blackaidsday.org/nbhaad.html>

What can I do?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has Provided a tool kit

<http://www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/toolkit/planning.html>

Tool Kit

Event Planning Resources

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health and the Office of HIV/AIDS Policy strongly encourage organizations and individuals to consider holding an event at the local level, writing a letter to the editor, or other wise engaging their community in observing HIV/AIDS Awareness Days.

This tool kit contains a number of resources that will assist you in planning and implementing the different HIV/AIDS Awareness Day observance activities at the local level. Please note that these are only ideas. All activities should be tailored to meet the specific needs of your own community. This information is provided only as a means to facilitate activities. It is impossible for us to cover all potential issues that could be addressed. You know your community best, and you know what messages it most needs to hear.

We urge you to use these opportunities as a local outreach opportunity. Share with others what you have learned so that they may benefit from your expertise and caring. Please let others know about this toolkit, and consider holding joint activities in your community. Thank you.

Activity Ideas

This is a list of relatively easy activities that can be undertaken in your community to acknowledge the observance of the appropriate HIV/AIDS Day. Should you decide to implement any activities, consider tailoring them to meet the needs of your community.

- Hold a forum at a local high school, public library, or community center to discuss HIV/AIDS issues.
- Encourage your local newspapers or school districts to sponsor essay, poetry, and/or poster contests on the specific celebration.
- Hold a news conference with leading city officials (e.g., Mayor, health department director) to raise public awareness of the

- impact HIV/AIDS has had in your community. To help increase HIV/AIDS awareness, invite other local public officials (health department officers and community leaders) to talk about the challenges remaining in the battle to fight the epidemic.
- Encourage the Mayor to visit a local HIV/AIDS service organization (ASO) or community-based organization (CBO) to discuss their current activities and future plans in responding to HIV/AIDS.
 - Convene a town hall meeting and invite local healthcare providers, policy makers, educators, community and faith-based leaders, and the general public to engage in dialogue about the impact of HIV/AIDS in the community. Invite people living with HIV/AIDS to share their experiences. Hold a reception for participants immediately following the town hall meeting.
 - Highlight the specific observance of the HIV/AIDS Day in your community newsletter and on list servers, bulletin boards, and/or Web pages.
 - Submit an HIV/AIDS awareness editorial or a letter to the editor to all of your local newspapers. You may want to use or tailor the attached sample talking points to address the specific needs within your community.
 - Encourage your local radio stations to broadcast Public Service Announcements (PSA) leading up to the specific observance day in an effort to help increase HIV/AIDS awareness. Please feel free to download the PSAs contained in this site for your local station.
 - Ask your mayor or other local elected official to send a letter/memorandum to all city employees (often the largest single employer in any area) about the specific HIV/AIDS Observance Day, and to inform them of available city services (e.g., HIV testing and/or counseling sites).
 - Contact local newspapers and television and radio stations NOW and encourage them to develop a story on the impact of HIV/AIDS in your community and/or let them know of your availability to be interviewed.
 - Contact your local television and radio stations to participate as a guest on locally produced "morning" shows and/or radio call-in shows.

Post-Event Follow Up

1. Prepare news releases and send to all reporters who were unable to attend your activities.
2. Send thank you letters to leadership and editors of local newspapers who attended or contributed to your activities. Include a short synopsis of what was achieved.
3. Prepare a follow up article for your own newsletter and board members as well as for community publications. Include photos of the event.
4. Ask media members for copies of coverage of your event.
5. Keep a roster of the leadership, media, and community invited, with appropriate notes so you can follow up for next year's activities.

To learn more visit:

<http://www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/toolkit/planning.html>

To download free posters and free fact sheets go to:

<http://www.hhs.gov/aidsawarenessdays/factsheets/february7.html>

As always, your Focus Program Directors, are available to assist you. If you have any questions please contact Sue Jones (sjones@thefocusprogram.com) 256-453-4245 or Sharlene Key (skey@thefocusprogram.com) 256-452-0196.