

**Open Letter to Co-Chairs and Coordinator of the
2009 National HIV Prevention Conference:**

INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ENDORSEMENTS INVITED

January 2009

Kevin A. Fenton, MD, PhD, FFPH, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Bob Kohmescher, MS, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Ms. Beverly Watts Davis, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Richard J. Wolitski, PhD, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Dear Drs. Fenton and Wolitski, Ms. Davis and Mr. Kohmescher,

Barack Obama's election as the 44th President of the United States signals a renewed commitment to efficient government guided by science in the development of public policy. His plans to develop and implement a National AIDS Strategy (NAS) sends a bold message to maximize the federal government's resources in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the United States. To that end, we support the goals of an NAS oriented around measurable outcomes, an actionable plan to achieve results, and greater coordination across agencies.

Achieving President Obama's vision of a NAS can begin immediately by approaching HIV prevention in a broad context with the full force and authority of the federal government.

For this reason, the Prevention Justice Alliance urgently requests that the 2009 National HIV Prevention Conference take deliberate steps to include sessions and discussions from a broad array of relevant federal agencies and departments beyond CDC and beyond the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

As a national conference, NHPC must strive to advance HIV prevention with the full force of the federal government. The conference should emphasize cross-governmental collaboration for HIV prevention to achieve this vision.

We applaud that this year's conference co-sponsors includes the Food and Drug Administration, the Indian Health Service, National Institutes of Health, and the Offices of Minority Health, Population Affairs, and Women's Health – all of which are part of the Department of Health and Human Services.

However, we note that key government agencies or departments with relevant roles in HIV prevention are not currently co-sponsors, including the Administration for Children and Families, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Justice, Department of Education, Department of Labor, the Domestic Policy Council, the Health Resources and Services Administration and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

As community partners, we urge you to please consider the following to ensure a broad-base government approach to advance HIV prevention:

1. Inclusion in conference planning and conference proceedings of officials from all government agencies with relevant HIV prevention activities, as well as full participation of all relevant divisions of HHS.

2. Government agency cosponsors should have meaningful roles at the conference. Their involvement must not be in name only.
3. Provision of a “cross-cutting theme” at the conference focused on intergovernmental coordination in HIV prevention.
4. At least one open meeting with conference attendees and officials from relevant government agencies.

The Prevention Justice Alliance is coordinated by AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP) and SisterLove. We promote unity in the AIDS community on the demands for leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS and for justice in HIV prevention policies. We understand that HIV prevention involves a large range of social determinants and public policies, some of which are outside of the mandate of CDC. We encourage the NHPC planners to take the lead on using this year’s conference as an opportunity to expand the government’s response through a more effective integrated approach.

As you know, we joined hundreds of allies to coordinate a series of events in 2007, called the Prevention Justice Mobilization, that included a vibrant rally and march through Atlanta during the conference itself. The Prevention Justice Alliance has been a catalyst for community based organizations and prevention advocates to be more integrated and unified in our efforts to effect change in prevention policies. We need federal agencies to better employ a similar strategy.

We look forward to engaging with you on this year’s conference, and thank you for your commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS.

Sincerely,

AIDS Foundation of Chicago
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP)
SisterLove

List in Formation

Cc: Melody Barnes, Domestic Policy Advisor; Tom Daschle, Health and Human Services

Please add __MY NAME __ MY ORGANIZATION or __ BOTH to the list of endorsers of this open letter:

Name:

Title:

Organization:

Address:

Email:

Phone

Individual and organizational endorsements should be send to Julie Davids at jdavids@champnetwork.org no later than Friday, February 15, 2009.