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**GMHC Says National HIV/AIDS Strategy Will Strengthen the Government's Response to HIV**

Washington, DC -- Today, the White House Office of National AIDS Policy released the United States' first-ever National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) since the beginning of the epidemic in 1981. Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) has long advocated for creation of this national plan that promotes coordination across agencies, levels of government and non-profit organizations; accountability; evidence-based policies; and a focus on improved prevention and treatment outcomes. It will also enlist faith communities, labor unions, business leaders and others in the fight.

"Three years ago, following the Open Society Institute's release of a ground-breaking report written by Chris Collins, GMHC began calling for a National HIV/AIDS Strategy," said Marjorie Hill, PhD, Chief Executive Officer of GMHC. "We partnered with leadership of AIDS service organizations across the country in collective advocacy efforts, including a public service campaign that raised awareness about the need for a NHAS, hosted the first-ever Congressional briefing on the topic, and facilitated numerous workshops at national and international conferences to raise the importance of the strategy," added Hill.

In 2007, GMHC collaborated with Housing Works and AIDS Foundation of Chicago to survey presidential candidates, garnering commitments from then-Senator Obama and, on the eve of the election, Senator McCain to create a strategy if elected. GMHC also partnered with AIDS Action Council and other groups to encourage Congress to appropriate \$1.4 million in the fiscal year 2009 budget to fund the creation of a NHAS.

Some key themes of NHAS are reducing the incidence of new HIV infections; improving health outcomes and access to care for people living with HIV; and addressing the striking HIV-related disparities affecting African Americans, immigrants, Latinos and Native Americans. Furthermore, the NHAS prioritizes reducing the disproportionate impact of HIV on gay and bisexual men of all races (who represented nearly three in five new infections in 2006).

"The news of the NHAS brings much-needed hope for all Americans affected by HIV/AIDS," added Hill. "We commend President Obama and the leadership of the Office of National AIDS Policy, particularly Jeff Crowley, Greg Millett, and James Albino. We are encouraged that the 14 community forums across the country allowed for the perspectives and experiences of people living with HIV to inform the content, and ultimately the success, of the strategy," concluded Hill.