

July 13, 2010
Vol. 16 No. 17

The Minnesota AIDS Project Supports National Efforts to Increase The Focus on HIV Prevention

MINNEAPOLIS, July13, 2010 - For the first time in its history, the United States will have a unified National HIV/AIDS Strategy. The plan released today outlines goals and an agenda to address the HIV epidemic in the U.S. This afternoon, administration officials will brief the public on the main features of the strategy.

The primary goals of the strategy are to:

- * Reducing New HIV Infections: Including intensified HIV prevention efforts in communities where HIV is most heavily concentrated and expanding targeted efforts to prevent HIV infection using a combination of effective, evidence-based approaches.
- * Increasing Access to Care and Improving Health Outcomes for People Living with HIV: A key component includes linking people to continuous and coordinated quality care when they are diagnosed with HIV.
- * Reducing HIV-Related Health Disparities: Adopt community-level approaches to reduce HIV infection in high-risk communities and working to reduce stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV.

The plan highlights the need for better cooperation and collaboration amongst government agencies and those in the communities working on the issue. The Minnesota AIDS Project also strongly supports the concept of following evidence of what works to address HIV among the most at-risk populations.

Lorraine Teel, executive director at the Minnesota AIDS Project said, "Establishing a comprehensive strategy to address the issue of HIV in the United States is long overdue and we welcome the commitment from the federal administration to support the work that needs to be done to reverse the rising trend of infections nationwide. At the same time, we recognize that in order to be successful, we will need the full engagement of a wide variety of stakeholders such as policymakers, those living with HIV, medical providers, parents, faith-based institutions, and community leaders. What this strategy highlights is that while anyone is at risk for HIV infection, in practicality, we need to target our limited resources towards those at greatest risk."

The national plan outlines, and provides data, regarding those communities and individuals at greatest risk. Geography, sexual orientation and gender are all important components to consider when allocating resources. The Minnesota AIDS Project has committed its resources and efforts towards working to limit new infections in these communities and most especially recognizes the importance, as does the plan, in engaging those who are HIV positive in these efforts.