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National Coalition for LGBT Health Welcomes Release of National HIV/AIDS Strategy:

Applauds Inclusion of LGBT Community, Calls for Greater Resources

Washington, DC – Today, the Obama Administration took a historic step in addressing the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic. The release of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy marks the government's commitment to recognizing that the epidemic in the United States is not over, and that only through a coordinated national response can we hope to stem the 56,000 new infections that occur every year in this country. The Coalition particularly welcomes the explicit inclusion of the LGBT community, especially transgender people and LGBT people of color, in the Strategy. The LGBT community continues to be disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS crisis, and the National Coalition applauds the government's efforts to seek new solutions for engaging community groups that bear the heaviest toll of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the U.S.

“The creation of a National HIV/AIDS Strategy represents an important step in recognizing the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on members of the LGBT community. Government resources, in the form of increased funding, programs, and data collection, must quickly follow,” says Rebecca Fox, the Coalition's Executive Director.

The Coalition would like to thank the Obama Administration for realizing that addressing behaviors alone is not enough to mobilize the response needed to address our domestic epidemic. The Strategy takes into account many of the social determinants that drive the epidemic, such as racism, sexism, and anti-LGBT bias, and it seeks to support interventions on a structural level that can reduce the burden of HIV/AIDS. These interventions must include increasing access nationwide to culturally-appropriate and effective HIV prevention, testing, and treatment services. They must also address factors such as homelessness, discrimination, and substance use that contribute to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in disadvantaged communities, including the LGBT community.

As Fox notes; “Although this move represents a critical step forward, it is important to recognize that this is just a first step, and there is a long road ahead to make certain that the Strategy’s goals are realized. We look forward to working with the Obama Administration, HHS, and the rest of the federal government to lower the rate of HIV/AIDS in the LGBT community and throughout America.”

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