



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

National Medical Association Recognizes World Aids Day

Silver Spring, MD -(December 1, 2013)-The National Medical Association (NMA) once again is pleased to join a plethora of organizations and people worldwide concerned about the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. World AIDS Day, observed annually on December 1, is the international day of coordinated activism against the continued spread of HIV/AIDS. World AIDS Day provides an avenue to strengthen the coordinated global effort to face the challenges of this epidemic. As the oldest and largest medical organization particularly focused on the health of African Americans, the underserved, and other communities of color, the NMA has a vested interest in working toward the eradication of HIV/AIDS and its devastating impact on African Americans.

UNAIDS estimates that there are now 35 million people worldwide living with HIV and 3.3 million of them are under the age of 15. In 2012, an estimated 2.3 million people were newly infected with HIV and 260,000 were under the age of 15. More importantly, every day nearly 6,300 people contract HIV—nearly 262 people every hour. In 2012, 1.6 million people died from AIDS and 210,000 of them were under the age of 15. Since the beginning of the epidemic, more than 75 million people have contracted HIV and nearly 36 million have died of HIV-related causes.

African Americans continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, and that disparity has worsened over time. According to the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) *HIV Surveillance Supplemental Report 2012*, African Americans account for more new HIV infections, people estimated to be living with HIV disease, and HIV-related deaths than any other racial/ethnic group in the U.S. Today, there are more than 1.1 million people living with HIV/AIDS in the U.S., and approximately half (510,000) are African American. Although African Americans represent only 13.6% of the U.S. population, they accounted for 44% of new HIV infections in 2010. "Although we have seen progress, Moreover, African Americans accounted for almost half of the new AIDS (the most advanced form of HIV disease) diagnoses (49%) in 2011. The rate of new HIV infections per 100,000 among African American adults/adolescents (68.9) was nearly eight times that of whites (8.7) and more than twice that of Latinos (27.5) in 2010 (Figure 2). The rate for African American men (103.6) was the highest of any group, more than twice that of Latino men (45.5).

These alarming statistics indicate that HIV/AIDS continues to ravage African American communities. The NMA has for decades been at the forefront of efforts to address this disease. As always, we continue to partner with the CDC and other federal and non-federal entities to develop and implement HIV/AIDS educational and awareness programs that are designed for both physicians and the patients they serve. Our Sexual History Taking Tool and our Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative are just two recent examples of our continued work to reduce the burden of this epidemic.

The NMA asks all its affiliates and partners to take part in some meaningful way, such as the implementation of AIDS testing for all of their patients during the month of December. "Although we have seen some progress, it is still a state of emergency when it comes to HIV/AIDS in the African American community. The inequities in the nation's healthcare system continue to play a major role in how African Americans contract the disease and the treatment they receive." said Dr. Michael A. LeNoir, NMA President.

HIV/AIDS is an epidemic that must be fought with massive, persistent effort on all fronts. It will take our collective will to continually reinforce key messages on HIV/AIDS prevention, testing and treatment, as well as the funding and resources to adequately put muscle behind the words.

In addition, the U.S. Preventive Task Force recommends that all people aged 15 to 65, including pregnant women, be screened for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Early diagnosis is a critical step for everyone. Visit the World AIDS Campaign website to read more about World AIDS Day and its history, find events, and get resources to coordinate your own World AIDS Day event. To find an HIV testing site near you, visit the [HIV test website](#) or visit NMA HIV/AIDS website at www.nmanet.org.

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Founded in 1895, the National Medical Association (NMA) is the nation's oldest and largest medical association representing the interests of more than 35,000 African American physicians and their patients. The NMA repeatedly advocates for policies that would assure equitable and quality health care for all people.