HRC Teams With Six LGBTQ, Black and Latino Groups to End HIV

Through its “My Body, My Health” initiative, Human Rights Campaign tackles HIV in minority and LGBTQ communities.

June 23, 2021 By Trent Straube

This Pride season, the LGBTQ advocacy group the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) has launched a new effort to fight HIV and stigma among minority groups most impacted by the epidemic: Black and Latino gay and bisexual men and transgender women of color.

For the nationwide initiative, titled “My Body, My Health,” HRC is teaming up with six community-based groups that have already established a presence in minority communities. In addition to amplifying their work, the initiative includes the launch of a directory of sexual health and LGBTQ resources for historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

What’s more, “My Body My Health” will offer in-home HIV tests to marginalized populations, an effort that coincides with National HIV Testing Day (#HIVTestingDay), observed this year on Sunday, June 27.

Details on these aspects of the campaign, plus sexual health information and related videos (like the one below), are collected on HRC’s new website, MyBodyMyHealth.org.

According to an HRC press release, the six groups the initiative partners with are:

- Us Helping Us in Prince George’s County, Maryland, and Washington, DC;
- BU Wellness Network in Indianapolis, Indiana;
- TruEvolution in Riverside, California;

- Arianna's Center in Miami, Florida, and San Juan, Puerto Rico;
- Brotherhood Incorporated in New Orleans, Louisiana; and
- Community Health PIER in Greenville, Mississippi.

Us Helping Us is a minority-led, minority-serving group. As such, the group is "responsible for ensuring that folks in our community have access to lifesaving HIV prevention and support services," said its executive director, DeMarc Hickson, PhD, in an HRC press release. "Our partnership with HRC is one of a kind and will allow us the opportunity to offer national in-home HIV testing. Our partnership is also inclusive of navigation services that will link members of the community to PrEP [pre-exposure prophyalxis] and appropriate care."

"My Body, My Health" is a product of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, which is HRC's educational arm, and is supported by Gilead Sciences, best known for many of its blockbuster HIV medications as well as its COMPASS initiative to fight HIV in the South.

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"It has been a decades-long objective of activists and advocates on the front lines to end the

stigma and create a generation free of HIV—this campaign is a multipronged effort to reach people in their communities with the resources and tools they need," said HRC president Alphonso David. "The disproportionate impact of HIV on Black and Latinx communities is a long-lasting health disparity that is multifaceted and fueled by an intersection of inequities and injustices, including stigma and discrimination."

Indeed, as HRC points out:

> Marginalized populations, including LGBTQ people, face both societal and economic barriers that prevent them from accessing health care, and communities of color have been hit the hardest—1 in 2 Black gay and bisexual cisgender men and 1 in 4 Latinx gay and bisexual cisgender men will be diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime. According to a recent CDC study, in seven United States cities, 42% of transgender women interviewed had HIV, with 62% of Black transgender women and 35% of Latinx transgender women already living with HIV.

You can learn more about HIV among specific populations by visiting the HIV/AIDS Basics on POZ.com and clicking on the "HIV in Specific Populations" section. For example, did you know that in 2015, African Americans represented 13% of the U.S. population but 43% of new HIV cases? In the South, they accounted for 52% of HIV diagnoses. Similarly, Latinos made up approximately 18% of the U.S. population yet accounted for about 25% of all new HIV cases. Finally, men who have sex with men (MSM) accounted for 85% of the estimated HIV diagnoses among Latino men.

For background about HRC's work with Gilead Sciences, read the POZ interview with HRC's David from earlier this year: "Behind a New $3.2M Partnership to Transform Black and Brown HIV Efforts."

In related news, last year HRC mailed free boxes of safe-sex tips and tools. For details, see "Want a Free Box of Sex-Positive Goodies?"

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