Join Celebs for the First HIV Stigma and Faith Summit [VIDEO]

GLAAD's free virtual summit runs from February 24 to 26. Here's how to join discussions on faith and HIV stigma in the South.

February 22, 2021 By Trent Straube

Faith leaders, HIV experts, journalists, community advocates and celebrities will meet up virtually this week to discuss HIV stigma and faith in the South—and you're invited to join them. GLAAD, an advocacy group that focuses on LGBTQ representation in the media, hosts its first HIV Stigma & Faith Summit from Wednesday to Friday, February 24 to 26, with the goal of educating and training participants about addressing the HIV epidemic in the southern United States.

Karamo of Queer Eye, Angelica Ross of American Horror Story and director Patrik-Ian Polk (Noah's Arc) are among the participants. The summit is cohosted by Gilead COMPASS Initiative, Emory University Rollins School of Public Health, University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, Southern AIDS Coalition, and Wake Forest University School of Divinity, according to a GLAAD press release.

> Wake Div's Dr. Shonda Jones & Dr. Allison Mathews will serve on the "Paths Shall Come Together: Intersections of Faith, Sexuality, and HIV" panel, Feb. 24 at 6PM @GLAAD HIV Stigma & Faith Summit. Register now to receive the latest updates: https://t.co/v5MRoMgU6j
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> — Wake Forest Divinity (@WakeDiv) February 19, 2021

The three-day event includes media training sessions for people of faith, panel discussions on bridging the gap between faith communities and issues of sexuality and HIV, conversations about the state of HIV stigma today, best practices for telling your personal stories on social media and a

conversation about the intersection of Blackness and queerness in the South.

Each day consists of two different events, each lasting between 60 and 90 minutes. To register for free, visit GLAAD.org/summit.

“Our work with organizations across the southern United States has made clear that faith-based communities offer an important channel to reach people living with and at risk of HIV,” said Shanell McGoy, the director of public Affairs at Gilead Sciences, in the press release. “GLAAD is an important partner to help shift narratives, reduce stigma and educate people about HIV. The HIV Stigma and Faith summit is helping prepare the next generation of leaders and expanding the skills of existing leaders in the southern United States to end the epidemic.”

“I’m so excited to help GLAAD kick off three days of critical conversations around faith, stigma and living with HIV. Only by having these types of conversations can we work together to eliminate the stigma around living with HIV in this country,” added Queer Eye’s Karamo.

GLAAD has been teaming up with pharma giant Gilead Sciences, which produces several blockbuster HIV meds since last summer when GLAAD published the results of its first State of HIV Stigma Study, which was funded by Gilead. At the same time, GLAAD announced a $9 million multiyear grant through Gilead’s COMPASS Initiative (the name stands for “COMmitment to Partnership in Addressing HIV/AIDS in Southern States”). For more details, see “How Comfortable Are Americans Around People With HIV? [VIDEO].”

To learn more about COMPASS on POZ.com, read about the 2019 grantees, the 2020 grantees, the debut of the initiative and the launch of seven new interventions to reduce stigma.

Earlier this year, GLAAD released a study exploring the representation of HIV-positive people in television. For more, see “Of the 773 Regular Characters on TV, Guess How Many Have HIV.”

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