Rally On

How to be an amazing AIDS advocate

November 1, 2009

ATTEND A NATIONAL AIDS STRATEGY TOWN HALL. There are still more chances for you to speak up at an AIDS town hall. Chris Collins, vice president and director of policy for amfAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research, gives this advice: “Write out your remarks and time yourself. Remember you will only have a minute, so go prepared. Say specifically what the issue is, what’s missing to address it and what the policy implications are.” (For an in-depth interview with Collins, go to poz.com/article/advancing-hivaids-research.)

WEIGH IN ON THE NATIONAL AIDS STRATEGY VIA POZ. Send us snail mail or post your comments, needs, fears and advice on National AIDS Strategy and we will include the contents of your letter in our report to the White House.

HOLD YOUR OWN TOWN HALL. The Office of National AIDS Policy provides a guide for taking the temperature of others in your community. Visit aids.gov and download instructions. Note: Jeff Crowley not included in do-it-yourself town halls.

E-MAIL THE WHITE HOUSE. The White House has established a special e-mail to hear directly from the community. The White House wants to hear from you how it can best achieve Obama’s three goals for HIV/AIDS (namely, reducing HIV incidence; increasing access to care; and optimizing health outcomes while reducing HIV-related health disparities). E-mail your thoughts to: aidspolicy@who.eop.gov.

JOIN ONE (OR SEVERAL) AIDS ADVOCACY GROUPS. Sign up for their e-mail and paper newsletters and action alerts. Visit their Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites. Participate in their toll-free planning or strategy calls (you can listen in and learn even if you’re not yet ready to pipe up). E-mail them your stories and needs so they can take them to the Hill. Go to poz.com/directory to connect to one today.

THANK OUR AIDS HEROES ON THE HILL. Send an e-mail or letter thanking these members of Congress for their support of HIV/AIDS and health care issues. Go to poz.com/advocacy/aidsheroes to see a list of members of Congress who champion our issues and to get their toll-free phone numbers and addresses.

NOMINATE AMERICA’S NEXT TOP ADVOCATE. POZ is looking for stories of people and organizations that serve as advocacy role models. Go to poz.com/stories and nominate someone today. Each month, a stellar new advocate or advocacy group will be featured on the POZ Advocacy hub.

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