



# Today Is HIV Vaccine Awareness Day

May 18, 2009

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The 12th annual HIV Vaccine Awareness Day (HVAD) acknowledges the work of volunteers, health professionals, scientists and community members in finding a safe and effective HIV vaccine. Commemorated yearly May 18, HVAD is led by the National Institutes for Allergies and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).

“An HIV vaccine is the best long-term hope to controlling—and one day ending—the worldwide AIDS pandemic,” Paul Kawata, executive director of the National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), said in a statement. NMAC is a national partner of the NIAID HIV Vaccine Education Initiative (NHVREI), which calls on the groups hardest hit by HIV/AIDS—such as African Americans and Latinos—to support and participate in vaccine research activities. This year, NHVREI introduced its Community Liaison Program, which trains community leaders to become peer educators.

“We work under the idea of ‘each-one-teach-one,’” NMAC program manager Albert Hannans said in a statement. “The liaisons not only provide their family and communities HIV vaccine information, they train them to be peer educators themselves. In observance of the HIV Vaccine Awareness Day, we would like to draw public attention—especially among African Americans and Latinos—to the critical need for increased community support for HIV vaccine research.”

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