Women Speak Up! 2016

November 14, 2016 By Trent Straube

Women living with HIV are “Organizing for Power”—that was the theme of “Speak Up! 2016,” a national leadership summit held in September in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, and organized by Positive Women’s Network–USA (PWN-USA). Naina Khanna, the group’s executive director, says the summit is important for expanding the leadership pipeline, building community among women with HIV and increasing their ability to advocate on state and national levels. The event’s panels, workshops and discussions included an array of topics—women’s reproductive autonomy, intergenerational leadership, decriminalization of HIV, drug use and sex work—but Khanna points out three that rose to prominence:

- The need to center leadership by women with HIV of trans experience
- An urgency to develop an advocacy agenda focused on issues affecting young women living with HIV, including those born with HIV
- The urgency of an explicit racial justice frame that will help orient HIV advocacy, leadership development and policymaking.

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