



Amplifying Voices, Advancing Policy: Highlights from AIDSWatch

This year's AIDSWatch brought together over 600 passionate HIV advocates.

April 28, 2025 By [Harold Phillips](#)

The HIV movement has long shown the transformative power of personal voices and stories to influence policy in Washington, D.C. What began as an initiative by the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) is now championed by AIDS United, making AIDSWatch a vital platform for national HIV organizations to amplify community voices on Capitol Hill.

This year's AIDSWatch brought together over 600 passionate HIV advocates, and NMAC was proud to collaborate with AIDS United and other organizations to harness the collective strength of our communities.

Special recognition goes to our Treatment team for their outstanding efforts in organizing 40 advocates from our [50+ Strong and Healthy Program](#), [National HIV & Aging Advocacy Network \(NHAAN\)](#), [Gay Men of Color Fellowship](#), and the Lifetime Survivor Network. During a full day of advocacy training, our delegation reflected the rich diversity of HIV communities and the unique challenges they navigate within state and district-level care systems.

Throughout the week, I had the privilege of connecting with many incredible individuals in the HIV workforce at federal, state, and local levels. After two decades in federal service, I'm acutely aware of the challenges we face—funding cuts, agency restructuring, and shifting policies that endanger the public health infrastructure forged during the HIV epidemic. These conversations reminded me of the resilience and dedication within our communities, even in the face of adversity.

One of my key takeaways is the importance of convening during challenging times. Coming together not only strengthens our resolve but also paves the way for innovative pathways forward. The energy from our advocacy efforts at AIDSWatch inspired us as we transitioned into hosting the 9th Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit the following week.

As we look ahead, the road will not be easy. But by staying informed, united, and strategic, we can continue to advocate effectively for the health and well-being of those we serve. Let's remain steadfast in our mission and committed to building a better tomorrow.

In community, with community,

Harold Phillips

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