A Call to Action From NMAC & Housing Works

Rally to save health care as Congress returns to DC on Sept 6. It's also HIV/STD Action Day—here's what you can do.

August 15, 2017 By Paul Kawata

People in the movement might be surprised by a joint letter from Charles King of Housing Works and me, but these are not ordinary times. NMAC is writing this letter to invite constituents at this year's United States Conference on AIDS to join Housing Works efforts on Wednesday, September 6, to greet Congress on its return from summer recess with a rally for the care we need to survive—sign up here!

These are confusing times with no clear roadmap. Since NMAC is hosting the HIV/STD Action Day on the same day, we want everyone to be aware of our mutual support and collective goal to not just save the Affordable Care Act, but to also strengthen our vision of ending AIDS as an epidemic. This can only happen when affordable health care becomes a human right for everyone.

Housing Works and NMAC may have different approaches, but that doesn't mean we can't work together and support each other. Successful leadership reaches across the aisle to bridge differences; this letter is a model for our expectations of Congress. We implore them to come together to fix healthcare and keep expanded access to Medicaid for all people living with HIV.

As you may know, Housing Works, the Positive Women's Network-USA, and the Center for Popular Democracy held a month's worth of direct action at Congressional office buildings. More than 700 people from all over the United States joined in, and 300 of them were arrested in brave acts of civil disobedience. Many of those arrested had severe disabilities and chronic conditions that made civil disobedience a risk. Bur losing health care coverage was an even bigger risk. When people power defeated the ACA repeal, we saw that relentless advocacy is still alive and well, and—most importantly—that it works.

Our movement was founded on civil disobedience and speaking truth to power. Housing Works and NMAC are grateful to everyone who is willing to stand up and fight. However, as the Black Lives Matter movement has shown us, the police are not always our friend. For many people, particularly people of color, this type of civil disobedience is not a reasonable option. Each of us must make this difficult decision, and we honor whatever choice you make.

Join us on Wednesday, September 6th! Whether you come to the Hill to speak with your members or to get arrested, there is a place for you. Housing Works will schedule several calls about the action. You can sign up for those calls here. NMAC has three webinars for HIV/STD Action Day, register here. Attend both or either, but please attend. Your movement needs you—how will you respond?

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