Getting Ready For 2016 USCA!!!

September 6, 2016 By Paul Kawata

2016 is **United States Conference on AIDS's** (USCA) 20th Anniversary! As a result, NMAC decided to change all the track topics, add many more pathways, and look forward to how biomedical HIV prevention is changing our work and may create a roadmap to ending the epidemic. Change is an inevitable part of our survival. 20 years ago Dr. Ho released his seminal paper on Protease Inhibitors. His work changed our movement from one that comforts the dying to helping people live with HIV. 20 years later, biomedical HIV prevention means that care is prevention and undetectable means an inability to transmit.
Once again we are being asked to change our ways of thinking. If you are on PrEP or have an undetectable viral load, do you have to use condoms? What is safe sex in 2016? It might be time for a generational hand-off for HIV prevention.

Since 1986 we've known that people of color are disproportionately impacted by HIV. In 2014 people of color became the majority of all new infections and the majority of people living with HIV. I don't have the answers, but I know it's my responsibility to shine a light on this problem and to urgently fight for health equity and racial justice.

USCA is **NMAC's** most visible program, in fact, some people think it's our only program. Hopefully you will hear about our work to lead with race, youth initiative, PrEP navigator training, HIV & Aging, policy work, leadership development for People Living with HIV, capacity building for CBOs, National HIV PrEP Summit, e-newsletters, race workshops with health departments, monthly webinars, and our urgent fight for health equity and racial justice.
NMAC's vision to lead with race impacts how we work. In a world full of sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, HIV-phobia, so many of us are treated like second class citizens. All who come to USCA are welcomed with open arms. You are beautiful exactly as you are. USCA is one place where we can be ourselves without judgment or discrimination. This is a value we expect of all USCA attendees.
Meeting The Conference Staff
Tara Barnes-Darby: Director of Conferences
Tara has worked at NMAC for over 18 years; however, this is her first year as the Director of USCA. I know she will appreciate your support. Phone: 202-870-0450 + Email: **tbarnes@nmac.org**

Alison McKeithen: Conference Manager
Welcome Alison back to NMAC. After a brief stint working with dentists, Alison returns to NMAC as Tara's #2 and the person is in charge of everything that Tara does not do. Phone 202-930-2567 + Email **amckeithen@nmac.org**

Cydney Brown: Conference Registrar
This is Cydney's first meeting. Please be kind, we don't want to scare her off after the first meeting. Phone 202-302-9720 + Email: **cbrown@nmac.org**

These women work miracles with too few people and a very pushy boss. Of course, they are supported by NMAC's **board** and **staff**. Feel free to contact them with any questions.
Getting To The Hotel
Most attendees will fly into Fort Lauderdale International Airport (**FLL**). It's 10 miles (25 minutes) from FLL to the **Diplomat Hotel**. A **taxi** will cost around $30, **uberX** is $16-20, **uber POOL** is $15.80, **Lyft** is $18, **Super Shuttle** is $21 for round trip, **public buses** will be your cheapest way to get to the hotel, but you will need to transfer buses to get to the hotel.

You can also rent a car. At the Diplomat self-parking is $26 + taxes per day (it is located across the street from the hotel). **Valet parking** is $36 + taxes per day.

The Hotel
The **Diplomat** is the host hotel. With the $130 per night room rate, the hotel sold-out quickly. Official overflow hotels include the **Crowne Plaza** and **Beachwalk Resort**. Both of these properties will have bus transportation to the Diplomat. If you are still looking for a hotel, the Beachwalk has rooms at $164.50 + taxes if you prepay.

As mentioned in earlier communications, the Diplomat is undergoing construction. When we signed the hotel contract this construction was not planned and we apologize for any inconvenience. NMAC is working with the hotel, but half of the main lobby will be cordoned off and not open to attendees.

How To Use USCA
Your time is limited and valuable. One of the best ways to use USCA is to schedule meetings with government officials, donors, health departments, capacity building providers, other executive directors or other activists committed to the same issues. See about getting on **Dr. Lansky's** (**White House AIDS Czar**) schedule. Have coffee with **Dr. Wolitski**, the acting director for the **Office of HIV/AIDS at HHS**. Chat with **Harold Phillips** from **HRSA's HIV/AIDS Bureau**. Catch-up with **Janet Cleveland** from **CDC**. Talk about ending the epidemic with **Charles King** from **Housing Works** or **Mark Harrington** from **TAG**. Speak with national executive directors like **Phill Wilson** (**Black AIDS Institute**), **C. Virginia Fields** (**National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS**) or **Guillermo Chacon** (**Latino Commission on AIDS**). I know how much they appreciate me using their real email addresses so that you can contact them directly. Where else can you go and see this many HIV leaders in the same room? Building a movement means building relationships. If you don't know **Naina Khanna** from the **Positive Women's Network-USA** or **Cecilia Chung** from **Positively Trans**, USCA is your opportunity to build relationships with movement leaders. It's been my experience that most of these leaders are easy going and want to share their knowledge with others.

2016 USCA Program Book
The Program Book is slated to go online on September 9th. Right now you can see the **agenda online**. As in previous years, the program book will be online and not printed. **NMAC** does this in an effort to be greener because past surveys told us that most people threw away the program book at the end of the conference.

Less Paul, More Staff
Plenaries will feature more NMAC staff. At the Opening, **Tara Barnes-Darby** will thank our sponsors. At the Federal Plenary, **Moises Agosto**, **Jackyie Coleman**, and **Kim Johnson** will speak about race and how it shapes NMAC's work. **Matthew Rose** will emcee the federal plenary. Treatment is running the Puerto Rico Plenary and the Biomedical HIV Prevention closing. Finally, **Alison McKeithen** will be part of the hand-off from Broward County to Washington, DC for USCA 2017.

Melissa Harris-Perry
We are pleased to announce that Melissa Harris-Perry will be part of **Gilead's** Plenary on Friday, September 16th. Melissa Harris-Perry is the Maya Angelou Presidential Chair at Wake Forest University.

Melissa is Editor-in-Large at Elle.com. She hosted the TV show "Melissa Harris-Perry" from 2012-2016 on weekend mornings on MSNBC.

Movie Night
Please keep Saturday night open so that you can go to movie night. Thanks to **Walgreens**' sponsorship, USCA is proud to host a showing of the **Last Men Standing**. This documentary follows the lives of 8 survivors of AIDS and the life they never thought they'd have.

Thanking Our Supporters
Like many associations, USCA is a big part of NMAC's annual budget. Without the sponsorships, registrations, and booth sales, NMAC could not do all the other programs. Everyone at USCA is giving their time and money. At NMAC, we feel a deep responsibility to make sure these limited resources are used wisely. Thank you to all of our sponsors, attendees, faculty, and exhibitors.

Since this is the 20th Anniversary, I've decided to talk out of school about the three (3) worst USCAs. At number 3 it's the **2008 USCA**. What made this a bad meeting was that it almost didn't happen. Six weeks before it was scheduled to start, we received word that the main conference hotel was not going to be finished with its remodel. Given that most people had already purchased their airline tickets, we had to find a hotel nearby that had availability on the exact same dates at the exact same or less sleeping room rate. Staff did an amazing job and we were able to move USCA to the Fort Lauderdale Convention Center. NMAC will always be grateful to everyone who was so understanding and willing to move cities on such short notice.

Number 2 has to be the 2005 USCA. This was a meeting that did not happen. You may recall, 2005 was the same year as **Katrina**. In the aftermath of Katrina, our country was on edge about the weather. Watching the destruction and the aftermath flooding in New Orleans, taught us to take weather warnings very seriously. 18 days after Katrina hit the gulf coast, Hurricane Rita followed a similar course towards Houston. The weekend before USCA was supposed to happen, we got a call from the hotel saying the Mayor had called for a mandatory evacuation of Houston. As a result, there would be no workers at the hotel to service our meeting. This was the first and only time we had to cancel. I will always be thankful to Carlos Velez who went to Houston to help any attendees who went to Houston.

The worst USCA is also my favorite memory of the meeting and our movement. On September 11, 2001, my plane flew over the Pentagon 45 minutes before it got hit. **2001 USCA** was scheduled to start on September 13th. Back then there was no playbook for what to do after a terrorist attack. All of the airports were closed and many people had already arrived in Miami for the meeting. We had no idea what to do, so we brought everyone together and asked the attendees. Overwhelmingly, everyone wanted to proceed with USCA. Partially because they were stuck in the city, but mostly because HIV stops for no one. In fact, when people heard the meeting was still happening, they drove, caught buses or Amtrak, to be together as a movement. My fondest memory is how our movement creates solutions in the face of adversity. Directly after agreeing to proceed, we realized we had no faculty. Someone stood and offered to do a workshop on fundraising, then someone else on HIV treatment, within 45 minutes we had scheduled a conference with just the people in the room as trainers. The next three days were some of the hardest, saddest, and most inspiring days of my life.

Hollywood Trolley & **Water Taxi**
The Hollywood Trolley costs $1 per ride. It runs up and down Ocean Blvd every 30 to 40 minutes. Take the trolley to the **boardwalk** of Hollywood Beach.

A water taxi service is located directly across from the hotel. Tickets are $25 for one day of unlimited rides. The water taxi does local stops around Hollywood Beach. It also has an express connection to the Hilton Marina in Fort Lauderdale.

Find A Walgreens or Other Necessities
The closest **Walgreens** is at 1300 Hallandale Beach Blvd. It's **1.6 miles** from the Diplomat. Across the street is the **Diplomat Mall**. Also located in this shopping center is a Winn Dixie, Starbucks, Panera Bread and other inexpensive dining options.
Visit the Social Media Lab at USCA: Get in the Know!
Want to learn how to set goals for your social media efforts and then measure impact? Learn about what others in the community have done? Want to get started on Twitter? Need tips on creating eye-catching visuals? Bring your questions, big or small, to the Social Media Lab at **USCA**. No appointment needed! The experts from NMAC and AIDS.gov have offered this lab for several years at USCA - and this year, we invite you and your questions back again! Stay tuned to the **AIDS.gov blog** for more details.

Location: Diplomat 1, Convention Center Dates/Times:
- Thursday September 15: 11 :00 a.m -12:45 p.m. and 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
- Friday September 16: 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Saturday September 17: 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday September 18: 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

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