Join Our World AIDS Day Capitol Hill Champions Reception

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November 16, 2022 By Paul Kawata

Please join our World AIDS Day Hill Champions Reception. I especially hope our DC colleagues can attend. Register in advance at RSVP@NMAC.org. NMAC hosts this reception to keep HIV on the minds of members of Congress and their staff. Attendance is free. Invitations will be sent to all members of Congress and their staffs with personal appeals coming from key allies to their colleagues.

Part of our job is to continually raise the awareness with members that HIV has not gone away and to be part of the ether of Congress. That is what makes the Federal AIDS Policy Partnership so critical with colleagues from multiple organizations that keep our work present on the Hill. The reception is part of NMAC's commitment to the HIV community, and I hope you will join us.

Our work is dependent on federal funding to support the health and wellness of people living with HIV as well as our work to end the HIV epidemic. A long time ago, back in the '80s, people started to build agencies to take care of their friends who were dying. We created new agencies because existing structures were afraid and turned their backs. With little to no help, we started the foundation for HIV care and services in America, a foundation that not only continues but has expanded beyond what most of us had considered possible.

Some very smart leaders also realized that those systems could not be sustained with private support. In the long term, only the federal government had the money needed for HIV care and services. They made a big investment in Washington. Their work continues through so many organizations and coalitions. Like me, I know they are proud and amazed by the results.

Recently, I was at a meeting where Robert Raben (The Raben Group) talked about the old days and working on the Hill. He shared that it is hard work that requires consistency and vigilance. Congress is its own world, with its own rules. He called out Cornelius Baker and Ernest Hopkins as examples of leaders who stood the test of time. People who were consistently fighting for our communities. I'm sharing because we need to know.

This is a long way of asking you to be show up. Bring your cameras and get your picture taken with members or each other. Post the photos on your social media to show that the HIV

community is out here grinding it out to maintain our visibility in Congress. You don’t need to add NMAC, just be sure to hashtag #HIV. If you can’t attend, like and share these posts. At the end of the day it’s about boots on the ground and our movements need to up our game.

There could be big fights ahead and now is the time to get ready. I am fearful and hope its just my neuroses, but…

Yours in the Struggle,

Paul Kawata

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