



NMAC Announces the Retirement of Longtime Executive Director Paul Kawata Following 2025 USCHA

His final U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS will take place in Washington, DC, from September 4 to 7. He will retire on October 7.

July 2, 2025 By [Paul Kawata](#)

After nearly four decades of transformative leadership, Paul Kawata, Executive Director of NMAC (formerly the National Minority AIDS Council), will retire on October 7, 2025, following the United States Conference on HIV/AIDS (USCHA) in Washington, DC. Paul Kawata has led NMAC—and the HIV movement—as a fearless advocate for communities of color since 1989, when he took the helm during the earliest, most devastating days of the AIDS crisis. Over 36 years, he shaped NMAC into one of the most influential voices in public health equity, pioneering programs and forging enduring coalitions across sectors.

Under Kawata's leadership, NMAC became known not just for its policy influence and programmatic work, but for cultivating inclusive spaces where the HIV community could gather, mobilize, and lead. He helped launch cornerstone convenings such as USCHA, the Biomedical HIV Prevention Summit, and the Coalition for Justice and Equality Across Movements—all vital platforms in the national effort to end the epidemic.

"I took this role at a time when leading an HIV/AIDS organization was not a career-builder. But it was necessary," said Kawata. "The communities I care about were being erased. Since then, science has advanced, but the fight for equity remains as urgent as ever. There have been highs and lows, and I'll carry all of it with me into my final USCHA this September."

Lance Toma, Chair of NMAC's Board of Directors and CEO of the San Francisco Community Health Center, praised Kawata's enduring impact: "Paul's legacy is written into NMAC's DNA—our unapologetic centering of communities of color, our coalition-building across political lines, and our unwavering commitment to inclusion and equity. NMAC's Board of Directors applauds Paul and his

outstanding track record of leadership on behalf of all of us. Our Board is focused on ensuring we honor Paul and all his contributions and accomplishments, as well as ensuring a smooth and seamless executive transition at this critical time in the HIV movement.”

Harold Phillips, NMAC’s Deputy Director of Programs, added: “Paul’s contributions have inspired a generation. We know the work is far from over—and our team is committed to continuing the mission and blazing new trails in the spirit he modeled for decades.”

Kawata’s final USCHA will take place September 4–7, 2025, in Washington, D.C.—a fitting stage to honor a leader whose work reshaped the HIV landscape and whose voice helped usher the community from crisis to coalition. While we will soon celebrate Paul’s legacy, we are also preparing for NMAC’s next chapter. Our Board of Directors is actively guiding the leadership transition and will be sharing more updates over the next few weeks.

View the full press release [here](#).

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