Planning season is coming

May 13, 2019 By Matthew Rose

The spring is our time to prepare for what will be a dynamic rest of the year. This summer the administration is set to begin the early stages of planning to end the HIV epidemic in its 48 counties, 7 states, and 2 cities. And we must be prepared to take advantage of the new opportunities that are availing themselves in the form of energy around the vision of ending this epidemic. We must be ready to act if we want to see this moment create the road to our future. There are three things that I wish to highlight for the everyday person as we work towards ending the epidemic - three areas, critical to address over the next move to help set our communities up for success.

First, what does the end of the epidemic mean to you and what does your community need to get there? These two fundamental questions must be answered as you begin your work. The answers to these questions will guide and ground your work as you head into the planning process. Second, challenge members of Congress to ensure the will of the people is reflected in the federal HIV budget. Finally, we must ensure that no one is left behind nationally or globally, as we work to end the epidemic by 2030. Both national and global work is essential to genuinely ending the epidemic.

The federal government will begin funding community planning efforts in July and communities must assess their needs to drive important community priorities into the conversation for meaningful and tangible changes. Representation of local planning bodies must reflect the local epidemic ensuing the balancing of power is reflective of those most vulnerable to the virus. We must create equity, in the broadest and most diverse ways possible so that no one is left behind. This new course must be designed through our stories, our voices, and our experiences -shaping this final plan in such a manner that it is a reflection of the collective experiences of the people planning for an ending that best matches the needs of everyone as best it could. To reach this, we must be prepared and focused on what we want, what we need and how we want it delivered to us while maintaining structures that will ensure accountability speed and equity throughout the process.

The intention of the people and the political leaders at levels is required for this plan of action to work. There has to be a commitment to make sure that money and resources are passed down to the community. Politicians and elected leaders must be held accountable to provide the resources to end the epidemic. It will be a test of courage, theirs and ours, to see this moment though. Politicians have long said that they are supportive of our movement and now if the time to prove it at all levels. We have to make sure our demands to end this epidemic is heard, and they acted upon. It will take the courage of the community to remind them what it means to be accountable

to us and meaning promised made are promises kept. We remember when political leaders said we could have an AIDS-free generation or when would Obama said that we could save the lives of a young black gay man. However, we continue to search for a world where those statements are valid only to find a slow pace towards lofty goals. And now in an era of big, bold ideas, we need to make sure that courage is rewarded and supported, but the silence of our friends on this topic is unacceptable.

This virus has been an injustice of inaction and allowed to fester in places because we didn't dare to stand up for those that were different, those that had been pushed to the margins.

This is a global calling, the same cry for justice rings across this fight. We know that the combination of wills, resources, science, and innovation will crave a way to take us to the end. But it won't be over until we ensure that the epidemics end for us all. If we leave some behind, we shame the work of those that fought before us. We can honor the legacy of the those that walked before by making sure our march is big, board and bold. Keeping with the unity of the spirit we know that both domestically and globally the target has been set. At 2030 if we are bold brave and express our true intentions through all courses of society can end the epidemic, ensuring equity and fairness throughout all of our work.

At the end of the day, there are 3 things you can do to make sure you have a productive May, bringing us closer to ending the epidemic.

1. What your goals and priorities are for ending the epidemic and know what your needs and what it will cost. Precision is your find when it comes to planning.

2. Call your elected officials and get them on record to supporting ending the epidemic. And once they are supportive ask for what you need. Tell them what it does and how it will change your life and the lives of those in your community. (try out this app to reach your elected officials)

3. Be bold in your coalition and make sure you bring everyone with you. We can only make this moment work if we have the power of the community to bear. Backing our grand plan to end this epidemic.

Here are additional resources our good friends at TAG put together around ETE planning these helpful resources and the third items is a community consensus document on ending the epidemic

Common Features of an EtE Plan

The Usual Suspects: Common Challenges for ETE Planning and Implementation in Emerging Jurisdictions

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