See You in DC for the United States Conference on AIDS!

It’s been a challenging time in Washington. That is why this year’s meeting—#2017USCA, starting Sept. 7—is so important.

September 5, 2017 By Paul Kawata

This is my final communication prior to seeing everyone at the United States Conference on AIDS. The 2017 meeting has already surpassed the registration numbers from both the 2015 and 2016 conferences. In other words, there will be lots of people. Please be patient and use your time standing in line to meet your colleagues from across the country.

If this is your first time attending USCA, you may be surprised by the diversity of attendees. Typically, 60% of the participants are people of color, 55% are women, 30% are people living with HIV, 75% of the men attending are gay men, and there is a significant delegation from the trans community. USCA strives to have representatives from all 50 states and the territories. In other words, this is a community conference that reflects the full scope of the epidemic. If you’ve never been to USCA, you will quickly see the difference from other conferences. We are proud to offer a safe space for people to be themselves without judgment or discrimination. The 2017 meeting will be a USCA Family Reunion, and our family values are built upon diversity, inclusion, and acceptance.

It’s been a challenging time in Washington. I believe that is why this year’s meeting is so important. People are fearful about the future. Between health care reform and the possibility of cuts to the federal HIV budget, attendees are seeking answers and community. While we may not have all of the answers, we will definitely have community. This year’s USCA is structured to not only train, but also to remind us why we do the important work that must be done. For many of us, this movement is more than just a job; it’s our life and the lives of our communities. In a world that can be very mean to people who are different, USCA celebrates our strange and wonderful family.

Latest Conference Information

To get the latest information on the meeting, download our smartphone app. It is a virtual portal of session descriptions, social media engagement, and logistic updates you will need to make the most of your conference experience.

Houston & SE Texas

USCA will have a moment during the Opening Plenary to stand-up for Houston and SE Texas. Six weeks after Katrina, NMAC brought a group of donors to New Orleans to see the devastation. As soon as Houston is ready, we intend to work collaboratively with other national organizations to support people living with HIV and HIV services in the region.

Recently, I received an email from Deondre Moore who lives in Houston and I wanted to share a small portion:

“USCA, for me, will hopefully be a time to heal and where I can refocus and get back on track. More importantly, during USCA it will be my first time seeing my mother since before the storm, and I cannot wait.”

After Katrina, we brought a small group of HIV leaders from New Orleans to DC to begin the planning process of moving forward. I remember how grateful they were for the meeting because it was the first time they could take a hot shower. This is another tragedy that we must and will overcome.

Hashtag

Use the hashtag #2017USCA. We’re not looking for stories about NMAC. We want you to tell the stories of people you meet at USCA, people who have committed their lives to ending the epidemic. Help expand the discussion about HIV on social media. Remember to post your photos!

Travel

Most people will arrive at either National Airport or Union Station. The quickest way to the hotel is via metro. The closest Metro stop to the Marriott is Convention Center on the GREEN and YELLOW lines. The Yellow line goes directly to the airport.

Hotel

The 2017 host hotel is the Marriott Marquis, 901 Mass. Ave NW. All of the workshops and plenary sessions and the exhibit hall are here. Unfortunately, the Marriott along with three other conference hotels are sold-out at the conference rate.

Registration

Registration starts on Wednesday, September 6, at 4 PM. It will be on the mezzanine level of the Marriott. To be greener and to save money, USCA only prints a “limited” number of program books. However, the full content can only be found online. The conference will have free Wi-Fi so remember to bring your laptop or smartphone.

Other Events

When putting your schedule together for the meeting, think about adding the Opening Reception, Film Screening, and the House Ball by Casa Ruby to your things to do. These are great ways to network with fellow attendees and celebrate the diversity of our movement.

The Opening Reception is on Wednesday, September 6, from 6 PM to 8 PM. It is at the Library of Congress in the James Madison Memorial Building, 101 Independence Ave. SE. The closest subway stop is the Capitol South metro located on the Orange and Blue lines. Congresswoman Maxine Water, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, and Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen will be our special guests.

There will be a special screening of Nothing Without Us: The Women Who Will End AIDS on Friday, September 8, at 7 PM in Shaw (meeting level 3 of the Marriott). This 70-minute film reveals that no plan to end the HIV epidemic will be complete until it addresses the complex realities of all women's lives.

Finally, there is a House Ball produced by Casa Ruby on Saturday, September 7. The Ball starts at 8 PM in the Marquis Ballroom at the Marriott. It is free for conference attendees, although there is a $25 cover for everyone else. All funds raised go to benefit Casa Ruby. This is a special opportunity to experience the culture and glamour of DC's trans community.

Thank you for being part of my strange and wonderful family. I look forward to seeing you in DC.

Yours in the struggle,

Paul Kawata

NMAC Excecutive Director

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