The Legacy of Dr. King and Our Struggle to End AIDS

January 17, 2013 By Paul Kawata

This Monday, as the nation commemorates the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President Barack Obama will also be sworn in for his second term as President of the United States. The historic significance of this event cannot be overstated, and for those of us who have dedicated our lives to realizing Dr. King's vision of not just racial equality, but social justice, Monday will mark the culmination of decades of struggle. But with each success, we are reminded that our nation's march toward equality is never complete. It is a constant evolution of hearts and minds, policy and tradition. Thanks to the work of Dr. King and so many others, our nation's made incredible progress, but substantial work remains. The fight against HIV/AIDS has always been about more than the search for medicine or a cure. It has been a battle for human dignity. To demonstrate that each life, regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, nation of origin, or religion, has inherent value. From the beginning, this epidemic has taken the largest toll on our most our focus now must be to ensure that those communities that have historically suffered the greatest health disparities are able to get the most out of these reforms. This means continued funding for traditional wrap-around/health completion services under Ryan White, but it also means tackling immigration reform and repealing HIV-specific criminal statutes. It means ensuring that every American has access to employment security, regardless of sexual orientation or gender expression. And it means ensuring that every young person has access to confidential, evidence-based and culturally appropriate sexual health education.

Dr. King once said that "human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable...Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals." As our nation celebrates the legacy of Dr. King and the second inauguration of President Obama, NMAC stands ready to fight for the vision of equality and justice that both of these men embody. I hope you'll join us.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/the-legacy-of-dr-kin