

Prayer for Unity

We pray for the unity of the Black Church, that we may find a unified way to fight this disease of HIV/AIDS. Lead the Church out of passivity and old-fashioned attitudes. Replace ignorance with education. Teach the young self-worth and strength, the strength of self-discipline. Teach the old new ways of caring and compassion.

We pray for the commitment of time and money that will provide crisis intervention, professional guidance, community seminars and outreach programs to provide alternatives to the harmful enticements of the streets.

Grant us, together, a knowledge of what is and what is not, as well as a vision of what can be.

*In the name of Jesus the Christ,
Amen*

From "Who will Break the Silence? Liturgical Resources for the Healing of HIV/AIDS"

Syracuse Area HIV/AIDS Technical Assistance Program

This program, supported by a three-year capacity-building grant from the Federal DHHS Office of Minority Health, **seeks to enhance the administrative and programmatic ability of minority-serving organizations address the HIV/AIDS epidemic by providing free technical assistance.** A portion of the grant is being targeted to support the efforts of African American faith-based entities including individual congregations as well as organizations that promote collaboration among congregations. Services available from CNYHSA under this grant include:

- **one-on-one technical assistance** to help individual organizations and collaborative groups address specific needs.
- **leadership development programs and workshops** which provide opportunities for administrators, managers, and volunteers to learn more about solutions to common needs.
- **resource products** which provide reference materials and management tools for recipients.

CNYHSA has provided planning and program development assistance since 1976. Issues addressed include health care access, need, utilization, finance, and program design; information system development; program evaluation; case management; strategic planning; and grant writing. CNYHSA also sponsors the Ryan White CNY HIV Care Network and operates two HIV rental assistance programs.

For more information, contact Terry Richmond,
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A Program of **CNYHSA**

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HIV/AIDS Program Opportunities For African-American Congregations

Did you know that . . .

- African Americans account for **50% of the 40,000 new AIDS cases** each year and more than 250,000 of those living with HIV/AIDS. More than 210,000 African Americans have died from AIDS since 1981.
- The **AIDS case rate** for Black adults and adolescents is **10 times the rate for whites** and nearly **3 times the rate for Hispanics**.
- The AIDS case rate for Black women is nearly 23 times the rate for white women; the rate for Black men 8 times the rate for white men.
- The **leading source** of transmission among Black men and women is **sex with infected partners**. The role played by Intravenous drug use is declining and now accounts for 24% of infections among women and 30% among men.

Why Churches should care?

- AIDS is a global problem among Black people. It has also taken an extraordinary toll on American Blacks who live with the virus and are put down, alienated, or ignored by family members, neighbors, schoolmates, church folk, and others in their lives.
- Bishop T.D. Jakes from Potter's House of Dallas says "**We have too long remained silent. We must develop ways to work together**, put aside petty differences, stabilize the loss of lives, reduce the rate of infection, and disseminate much needed information. HIV/AIDS is not a foe we can defeat individually. We are not safe while anyone is infected. We must work to get all groups to a healthy condition. **We cannot care just for those we agree with. We must help all hurting people to safety.**"

What can Churches Do?

- **Welcome everyone regardless** of their HIV status or sexual orientation.
- Have the pastor **deliver periodic sermons** relating to HIV/AIDS issues.
- Offer **special prayers or host prayer vigils** for those with AIDS. Include AIDS facts in bulletins, distribute educational brochures.
- Host a **church conference or workshop** on HIV/AIDS.
- Talk about HIV/AIDS topics during **Bible Study and Sunday School**.
- **Participate in HIV testing events**. Encourage HIV testing of members. Address the fears and stigma about testing.
- Create an **AIDS Ministry**, unit or care team that will be responsible for ongoing AIDS education projects or be willing to **help families that are dealing with the disease**.
- **Hold special AIDS prevention programs** for teens, women, or parents.
- Encourage church members to **volunteer at local HIV/AIDS service centers**.
- **Collaborate with other community organizations** concerned about HIV/AIDS.
- Organize **church-wide petitions to advocate for more HIV/AIDS funding** and services for Black communities.
- **Participate in the Black Church Week of Prayer** for the Healing of AIDS (the week begins on the first Sunday in March).

Adapted from "Blessed are They that Comfort: An Introduction to HIV/AIDS for Black Congregations" from Balm in Gilead

Ten keys to developing Church-Based AIDS Ministries

- Talk with the pastor about the need to address AIDS in your church.
- Assess the need for an AIDS ministry program in your church.
- Become as knowledgeable about AIDS as possible.
- Decide on how extensive your AIDS ministry will be.
- Decide on one specific project with clear goals and objectives.
- Decide if the ministry requires finding.
- Have a clear, written job description for volunteers.
- Assess your ability to minister to persons whose lifestyles are different, unfamiliar, or distasteful to you.
- Evaluate your ability to discuss issues of death and dying.
- Have patience.

Excerpted from "Developing a Church-Based AIDS Ministry Program" by Rev. Jacqueline C. Wilkerson

If you need help . . .

Organizations which can assist faith communities with HIV/AIDS issues include:

- Balm in Gilead (www.balmingilead.org; 888-225-6243)
- NYS AIDS Institute Faith Initiative (518-473-8755)
- Syracuse Area HIV/AIDS Technical Assistance Program (315-472-8099)
- Black Leadership Commission on AIDS of Syracuse (315-478-0012) and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (315-478-0441)
- The Gospel AIDS Ministries in Education program of F.A.C.E.S. (315-671-5832) and AIDS Community Resource's H.O.P.E. Alliance (315-475-2430)
- CNYHIV Care Network Community Awareness Committee (315-472-8099)