WASHINGTON, DC - Every 9 ½ minutes another person in America becomes infected with HIV. Officials from the White House, Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced last week a new five-year national communication campaign, *Act Against AIDS,* which highlights this alarming statistic and aims to combat complacency about the HIV/AIDS crisis in the United States.

According to CDC data released last year, about 56,000 Americans become newly infected with HIV each year -- significantly more than was previously known -- and more than 14,000 people with AIDS die each year in the United States.

"*Act Against AIDS* seeks to put the HIV crisis back on the national radar screen," said Melody Barnes, Assistant to the President and Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council. "Our goal is to remind Americans that HIV/AIDS continues to pose a serious health threat in the United States and encourage them to get the facts they need to take action for themselves and their communities."

The campaign will feature public service announcements (PSAs) and online communications, as well as targeted messages and outreach to the populations most severely affected by HIV/AIDS, beginning with African-Americans, with subsequent phases focusing on Latinos and other communities disproportionately impacted.

To help achieve widespread use of the campaign messages within African-American communities, the Obama Administration also announced today the *Act Against AIDS*

Leadership Initiative (AAALI), a partnership with 14 of the nation's leading African-American civic organizations to integrate HIV prevention into each organization's outreach programs.

To promote broad use of the campaign messages, CDC is also collaborating with the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation to focus on outreach and technical assistance to the media and the entertainment industry.

The *Act Against AIDS* campaign will be supported by a CDC budget of roughly $45 million over the next five years, as well as the efforts of community, media, and public health partners across the country to promote and utilize campaign materials and messages.

Campaign's Initial Phase To Target General Public and Specific Communities at Risk

The first phase of the *Act Against AIDS* campaign, called "9 ½ Minutes" uses a series of video, audio, print, and online materials to increase knowledge about the severity of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the United States. The campaign highlights the simple fact that every 9 ½ minutes someone in the United States becomes infected with HIV.

The materials released today direct Americans to “get the facts” by going to the Web site www.NineAndaHalfMinutes.org as a first step toward learning how they can help protect themselves and others. The site provides basic education about HIV/AIDS as well as referrals to HIV prevention and testing services and organizations throughout the nation.

“Right here in the United States, every 9 ½ minutes someone’s brother, sister, best friend, father or mother becomes infected with HIV,” said Jeffrey Crowley, Director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy. “Yet, research shows that many of those becoming infected do not recognize their risk. This is a major concern, because lack of knowledge contributes to increased risk behaviors.”

The next phase to launch will focus on African-Americans, who, by far, bear the greatest burden of HIV in the United States. While accounting for just 12 percent of the U.S. population, Blacks represent roughly half of new HIV infections and AIDS deaths every year. Targeted communications to encourage increased HIV testing among the two groups of African-Americans most severely affected, gay or bisexual men and women, will begin shortly.

Future phases of the *Act Against AIDS* campaign will focus on reaching specific populations at greatest risk with HIV prevention messages tailored to meet their unique needs including Latinos and other high risk groups.

Innovative Partnership with Kaiser to Increase Participation from Media

To encourage broad use of *Act Against AIDS* campaign materials and messages, CDC is partnering with the Kaiser Family Foundation – a leader in health policy and communications – to enlist widespread participation in the campaign from the media and entertainment industries. The initiative will establish a coalition of media partners who are committed to increasing knowledge of HIV/AIDS in the United States. Industry partners will be encouraged to use the PSAs, and to undertake their own additional efforts.

“The media and entertainment industries are powerful forces in breaking through complacency and focusing national attention on important issues,” said Drew E. Altman, Ph.D., president and CEO of the Kaiser Family Foundation. “Kaiser is pleased to partner with the Obama Administration and the CDC to help build and sustain a coordinated national media response to HIV and AIDS in the United States with particular focus on the most impacted communities.”

Partnership with National African-American Organizations Extends Reach of Campaign

The *Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative* (AAALI) will work with leading organizations in multiple sectors of the Black community – civic, business, media and education-- to deliver campaign messages and conduct community outreach activities.

The initiative's participants include: 100 Black Men of America, American Urban Radio Networks, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, National Action Network, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), National Coalition of 100 Black Women, National Council of Negro Women, National Medical Association, National Newspaper Publishers Association, National Organization of Black County Officials, National Urban League, Phi Beta Sigma and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

While many of the organizations funded today have long been committed to addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis among African-Americans, the new initiative will enable each organization to support a full-time HIV/AIDS coordinator to promote the use of the *Act Against AIDS* campaign materials and messages through the organizations' national and local networks; enhance their HIV prevention activities; and collaborate with other AAALI partners, members of the African American faith community and the CDC.

"Reducing the disproportionate toll of HIV in Black communities is one of CDC's top domestic HIV prevention priorities, and African-American leaders have long played an essential role in this fight," said Kevin Fenton, M.D., director of CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP). "This new initiative will further harness the collective strength of some of the nation's leading African-American organizations to reach directly into the communities they serve with critical, life-saving information."

The *Act Against AIDS* campaign is only one component of CDC's HIV prevention efforts for African American and other communities at risk, which include tracking the course of the HIV and AIDS crisis, conducting research to develop new HIV prevention approaches, expanding access to HIV testing, and delivering proven prevention programs for those at greatest risk through its nationwide partnerships with state and local health departments and community-based organizations.

For more information on Act Against AIDS campaign and partner activities, please visit www.aids.gov
or
www.cdc.gov/hiv/aaa
. For information about 9 ½ minutes, visit
www.NineAndaHalfMinutes.org
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