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Fourth Annual Day of Unity Brings Together Faith Leaders across the Country to fight HIV in Black America

Nationwide Initiative Encourages Black Faith Leaders to Educate Congregations on Disproportionate Impact of HIV on Black America

BALTIMORE, June 30, 2015 – On Sunday, July 12th, the NAACP will recognize *The Black Church and HIV: The Social Justice Imperative* fourth annual nationwide Day of Unity, to combat the social injustices that have led to the disparate impact that HIV has on Black America. As a cornerstone of the initiative, the Day of Unity encourages pastors to address the epidemic's impact on the Black community with their congregations by preaching from the pulpit about HIV as a social justice issue.

The HIV epidemic is a public health crisis in the Black community, and eliminating it will require a sustained commitment. Black Americans account for 44 percent of all new HIV infections in the U.S. while comprising only 12 percent of the population. Almost half (510,000) of the estimated 1.1 million people living with HIV in the U.S. are Black.

This year, the Day of Unity is calling upon pastors to commit to the following actions:

- Preach – From the pulpit to the pew with messages about HIV
- Share – On social media using the hashtag #DayofUnity, with local media, and in your community
- Act – Fight HIV with a testing drive or community event

Historically, the NAACP and Black faith leaders have been a catalyst for change on critical social issues including voting rights and employment opportunities. An estimated 20 million Black Americans attend church every week. Pastors have an unparalleled opportunity to engage parishioners to end HIV stigma and begin to view the disease as a critical social justice issue facing their communities.

Faith leaders can pledge to join in the Day of Unity at www.TheBlackChurchandHIV.org. There are more than 21,000 Black churches in the U.S., and with your help, we can make a significant impact and inspire people to help put an end to the HIV epidemic in Black America.

About The Black Church and HIV: The Social Justice Imperative

Through The Black Church and HIV: The Social Justice Imperative initiative, the NAACP, in partnership with Gilead Sciences, Inc., is harnessing the historic power of the Black Church to end the HIV epidemic in Black America. In 2013, the NAACP and Gilead Sciences, Inc. made a joint Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Commitment to Action to expand the pilot initiative from 12 cities to the 30 cities that form nearly two-thirds of the nation's HIV epidemic. Over the next five years, the initiative aims to engage nearly

3,000 faith leaders to reach approximately 1.125 million people in the Black community with messages about HIV.

The initiative is working to overcome stigma and address HIV as an issue of social justice by conducting faith leader trainings; securing formal resolutions from 7 of the 9 historically Black denominations to include HIV as a social justice issue in church activities; and integrating HIV-related coursework into the required curricula at predominantly African American theological seminaries. Learn more at www.TheBlackChurchandHIV.org.

About the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

The NAACP is the oldest and largest civil rights organization in the U.S. Born out of the Niagara Movement and its deep connection to the Black faith community, social justice advocacy has always been a central focus for NAACP. In keeping with this tradition, NAACP is committed to eliminating the racial and ethnic health disparities in the U.S., including prevention and treatment of HIV infection.

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