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The Black Church and HIV Initiative Demonstrates Measurable Progress Toward Its Commitment to Advancing Faith-Based HIV/AIDS Engagement

Program Trains Black Church Leaders Nationwide to Educate Parishioners on HIV Prevention

New York, September 27, 2015 – Leaders of *The Black Church and HIV: The Social Justice Imperative*, a program designed to enlist faith leaders as change agents in addressing the disparate impact of HIV/AIDS on the African American community, provided a progress update on their Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) “Commitment to Action”, at the CGI 2015 Annual Meeting.

Featured by CGI, the initiative is a joint commitment of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Gilead Sciences, Inc. By 2018, *The Black Church and HIV* initiative aims to reach faith leaders in the 30 cities that account for nearly two-thirds of the nation’s HIV epidemic.

“Real change starts with action, and that’s why we have called upon the Black Church to partner with us to fight against HIV before we lose a generation of our brothers and sisters to this disease,” said Roslyn M. Brock, Chairman of the NAACP National Board of Directors. “*The Black Church and HIV* is asking faith leaders to lend their voices to this national movement to stop the social injustices that have led to the unequal impact of HIV/AIDS on our community.”

The Black Church and HIV focuses on three components: providing local trainings for pastors and faith leaders in the Black Church; obtaining formal resolutions from mainline denominations to incorporate HIV as a social justice issue into the Church’s ministry; and facilitating the integration of HIV-focused coursework into required curricula of historically Black seminaries.

Now nearing the end of its second year, *The Black Church and HIV* is on track to complete 25 percent of the target program trainings. The initiative has already reached more than 500 pastors with messages about integrating HIV as a social justice issue into church activities. The initiative also has prompted the ratification of formal resolutions from two of the nine mainline denominations, and is working with several predominantly Black seminaries to train future faith leaders on HIV prevention.

John Faison, senior pastor at Watson Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn., and an ambassador and active member of the advisory board for the initiative, shared these program successes and other markers of progress during the CGI Opening Plenary Session.

“The church is a cornerstone of the Black community and, as faith leaders carrying out God’s work, we have a responsibility to drive a dialogue about the impact HIV/AIDS is having on our community. With the support of the NAACP and Gilead Sciences, the milestones we reported mark the beginning of a social movement to change how the Black Church and Black community confront HIV,” said Pastor Faison. “Ultimately, we will help change the course of the HIV epidemic in our community.”

Tomorrow, Pastor Faison will participate in a panel discussion on breaking down the stigma around sexual health, where he will discuss the role of the Church in addressing sexual health issues such as HIV/AIDS.

About the NAACP-Gilead Commitment to Action

Specifically, by 2018, the program will:

- Conduct 45 trainings in the 30 cities that make up nearly two thirds of the U.S. HIV epidemic across 17 states and the District of Columbia;
- Help secure formal resolutions from seven of nine historically Black denominations to engage pastors in advocacy about HIV as a social justice issue; and
- Engage with 10 predominantly African American theological seminaries to integrate HIV materials into required curricula at five seminaries.

About the NAACP

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest nonpartisan civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities. You can read more about the NAACP's work and our five "Game Changer" issue areas [here](#).

About Gilead Sciences

Gilead Sciences is a biopharmaceutical company that discovers, develops and commercializes innovative therapeutics in areas of unmet medical need. The company's mission is to advance the care of patients suffering from life-threatening diseases. Gilead has operations in more than 30 countries worldwide, with headquarters in Foster City, California.

About the Clinton Global Initiative

Established in 2005 by President Bill Clinton, the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), an initiative of the Clinton Foundation, convenes global leaders to create and implement solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. CGI Annual Meetings have brought together 190 sitting and former heads of state, more than 20 Nobel Prize laureates, and hundreds of leading CEOs, heads of foundations and NGOs, major philanthropists, and members of the media. To date, members of the CGI community have made more than 3,200 Commitments to Action, which have improved the lives of over 430 million people in more than 180 countries.

In addition to the Annual Meeting, CGI convenes CGI America, a meeting focused on collaborative solutions to economic recovery in the United States; and CGI University (CGI U), which brings together undergraduate and graduate students to address pressing challenges in their community or around the world. This year, CGI also convened CGI Middle East & Africa, which brought together leaders across sectors to take action on pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges.

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