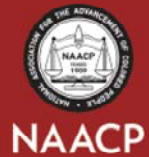




# THE BLACK CHURCH & HIV THE SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPERATIVE



## Talking Points for Day of Unity

### About the Day of Unity

- Established in 2011, Day of Unity brings faith leaders across the nation together to preach from the pulpit about HIV/AIDS as a social justice issue.
- Day of Unity on July 12, 2015 is a cornerstone of [The Black Church & HIV: The Social Justice Imperative](#) initiative, designed to encourage pastors to address the HIV epidemic, reduce stigma and create a network to take action and stop the social injustices that have led to the unequal impact HIV is having in our neighborhoods.

### HIV in Black America

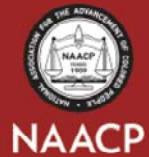
- While HIV is no longer a death sentence, Black America continues to be ravaged by the virus, more so than any other racial or ethnic group.
  - African Americans account for only 13% of the U.S. population and represent almost half (44%) of the 1.2 million people currently living with HIV/AIDS in the U.S.
  - The rate of new infections among Black men was the highest of any group by race and sex — more than six times that of white men.
  - 1 in 32 Black women will be diagnosed with HIV during their lifetime.
  - Of the nearly 21,000 infections estimated to occur each year among African Americans, one-third (34%) are among young people aged 13 to 24.

### Commitment to Day of Unity

- We can do something about this. We can turn the tide of HIV and its impact on the Black community.
- Today on this national Day of Unity, I pledge before you my congregants to take steps to address HIV as a social justice issue in our community:
  - **Insert your commitment and message of social justice. Commitments could include:**
    - Preach a sermon about HIV as a social justice issue or the disproportionate way it is impacting the Black community
      - Address HIV as a Social Justice issue from the pulpit.
      - Address mistrust and fear of the health care system.
      - Address stigma of HIV.
    - Host an educational workshop for our congregation
    - Personally empower parishioners to engage in their health and learn their status
    - Provide HIV screenings at our church in partnership with a local health agency
    - Advocate for change to address disparities in insurance, testing, health access, and health quality.
    - Commit to on-going activism to win the battle against HIV.
- The Black Church continues to be a powerful instrument of support, comfort, and inspiration in our community. Most of all, it is a place where we as a people have always felt safe while being empowered and informed.
- No other institution other than the Black Church has the potential to create change, address the stigma associated with HIV, and stop the social injustices that have led to the unequal impact in the Black



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community.

- There is the immediate need for faith leaders to take action and responsibility for what is happening in the Black community.
  - A Florida minister participating in the initiative said, “I have conducted more funerals for those who have died from HIV than lives I have saved.”

## Background Information

### About the NAACP and The Black Church and HIV: The Social Justice Imperative Initiative

- The NAACP, as the oldest and largest civil rights organization, is calling Black Churches to action to band together and expand the fight for social justice through *The Black Church & HIV: The Social Justice Imperative*.
- *The Black Church & HIV* is equipping faith leaders across the country with new ways to engage their congregants in conversations about HIV/AIDS.
  - The partnership with black faith leaders aspires to create a movement that encourages communities to take action to stop the social injustices that have led to the unequal impact HIV is having in their neighborhoods.
- To double down on the fight against the disease, in the fall of 2013 the NAACP and its partner Gilead Sciences announced a joint Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Commitment to Action to significantly scale up the response to HIV/AIDS in Black America.
  - CGI is an initiative of the Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation. CGI's members create Commitments to Action, plans that present innovative approaches to combating prevailing global challenges.
- The NAACP efforts will build on the momentum of *The Black Church and HIV: The Social Justice Imperative* pilot from 2013 to expand and engage nearly 20 million Black congregants across the United States in the social justice fight to end the HIV epidemic in Black America.
- Learn more about *The Black Church & HIV: The Social Justice Imperative* and access multiple HIV resources at <http://www.theblackchurchandhiv.org/>

### HIV: A Social Justice Issue

Social Justice is the equitable distribution of social, economic and political resources, opportunities, responsibilities and their consequences.

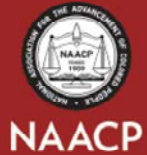
- The social justice movement is centered on fighting all forms of oppression, discrimination, and disenfranchisement. It calls for systemic change of governments, policies, and practices that empower all people to live healthy and productive lives.
- Why HIV is a social justice issue?
  - When we see anything disproportionately affecting one group of people more than others, whether it is poverty, education or health, we must question if the root cause has to do with social injustices.
  - HIV disparities have more to do with the systematic realities of healthcare and society than individual or group behaviors.
  - The high rates of HIV for Black people in the U.S. point to the overwhelming injustices in the



A joint Clinton Global Initiative Commitment to Action by the NAACP and Gilead Sciences, Inc. to end HIV in Black America. Funding is provided by Gilead Sciences, Inc.



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- political, healthcare, economic, and educational systems.
- This threat to the survival and well-being of our community is a social injustice. HIV is impacting our community, and it is our responsibility to speak out and fight the systems that make and keep us vulnerable to HIV infection.
  - Think about these injustices:
    - If Black America was its own country, it would rank 16th in the world for HIV rates.
    - The rates of HIV in the Black community are comparable with other areas of social injustice.
      - 1 in 15: Black men aged 18 and older are incarcerated
      - 1 in 16: Black men will be diagnosed with HIV during their lifetime.
  - We must reframe the way we think about HIV. It is not just about our behavior. It is about the neighborhoods in which we live and the social structures around us. And we, as a community, can make a difference.

## What is HIV?

**H:** Human - This particular virus can only infect human beings.

**I:** Immunodeficiency- Weakens an immune system by destroying the cells that fight disease & infection.

**V:** Virus - A virus can only reproduce itself by taking over a cell in the body of its host.

- Your immune system cannot clear HIV
- HIV attacks a key part of your immune system – your T-cells or CD4 cells.
- Your body has to have these cells to fight infections and disease, but HIV invades them, uses them to make more copies of itself, and then destroys them.
- Over time, HIV can destroy so many of your CD4 cells that your body can't fight infections and diseases anymore.
- HIV infection can lead to AIDS.

It is important to know your HIV status for these reasons:

- Many new HIV infections are caused by people unaware of their HIV status.
- HIV medicines are more effective if you start them early.
- Starting treatment early can mean the best health for you and a longer time before you develop AIDS or other infections. Unfortunately, most people do not find out they have HIV until the disease is at advanced stages. This limits the treatment options.