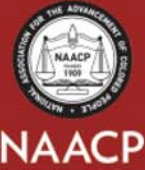




# THE BLACK CHURCH & HIV THE SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPERATIVE



## Harnessing the Power of the Black Church to End the HIV Epidemic in Black America

More than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States, African Americans bear the greatest burden of HIV. An estimated 1.1 million people are living with HIV in the U.S., and almost half (510,000) are Black. The rate of new HIV infections among African Americans is almost eight times higher than among whites, and if Black America were its own country, it would rank 16<sup>th</sup> in the world for new HIV infections.

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 scale *The Black Church and HIV* initiative to reach the 30 cities that comprise roughly two-thirds of the nation's HIV epidemic.

### The Power of the Pulpit

For generations, the NAACP and Black faith leaders have been a catalyst for change on critical social issues including voting rights and employment opportunities. As trusted conveners and educators of the Black community, these leaders can be a powerful force for change with respect to the HIV epidemic. Their concerted efforts to share the knowledge and tools that exist today to support HIV prevention, treatment and care can enable the estimated 20 million African Americans who attend church weekly to end HIV stigma and begin to view the disease as a critical social justice issue facing their communities.

*The Black Church & HIV: The Social Justice Imperative* initiative utilizes the prominent role of faith leaders in the Black community and the potential for changing the course of the epidemic if Black faith leaders engage in the fight against HIV. The purpose of the initiative is to help reverse the severe and disparate impact of HIV on African Americans by empowering pastors with the knowledge and support to preach to their congregations about HIV.

The initiative is comprised of three core elements: (1) training pastors, (2) securing formal endorsements from denominational leadership and (3) facilitating the integration of HIV-focused coursework into required seminary curricula. These activities are designed to help shape views about HIV for current and future faith leaders, both at the local level and at a national leadership level. In each of these settings, the initiative provides Church leaders the skills, information and support they need to transform HIV/AIDS from a polarizing and stigmatizing issue into a social justice priority for the Black community.

### Commitment to Action

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 make up 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.

**FROM THE PULPIT TO THE PEW:**  
The NAACP is engaging nearly **3,000** Black Church faith leaders to reach nearly **1.125 million** people in the community with messages about HIV.

**TheBlackChurchandHIV.org**

- Denominational Leadership Engagement
- Faith Leader Trainings
- Seminary Courses





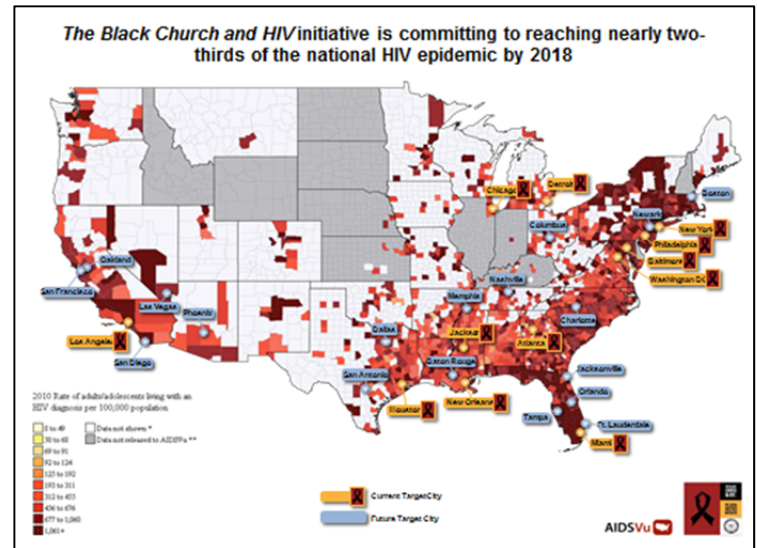
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NAACP

Specifically, the program will:

- Conduct 45 trainings across the 30 cities that make up nearly two thirds of the U.S. HIV epidemic across 17 states and the District of Columbia;
- 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 and integrate HIV materials into required curricula in five.



## Get Involved

There is the immediate need for faith leaders to take action and responsibility for what is happening in the Black community. Without action, the epidemic will continue to disproportionately affect our families, brothers, sisters and communities.

*Everyone can:*

- Join the fight.
- Dispel the myths.
- Get tested. Know your status. 1 out of 5 people who are positive do NOT know it.

*Faith Leaders can:*

- Address HIV as a Social Justice issue from the pulpit.
- Consider how the best practices, strategies, and recommendations outlined in the NAACP Manual could help you build your HIV advocacy approach.
- Take ownership. 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.

For more information please visit our website at [www.TheBlackChurchandHIV.org](http://www.TheBlackChurchandHIV.org)



We welcome all questions and comments.

Please call us at (410) 580-5619 or email at [health@naacpnet.org](mailto:health@naacpnet.org).