



Policy Watch



Thursday, June 16, 2011

Congressional Activities

HIV/AIDS programs fared well compared to most other domestic programs in the final FY2011 funding allocations. Despite cuts of \$740 million to (CDC), HIV prevention and surveillance programs under the National Center for HIV, Hepatitis, STD and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP) received a \$1 million increase, in addition to the continuation of \$30 million in funding which came from the Prevention and Public Health Fund in FY2010. With the FY2012 appropriations process underway, this year promises to be a very tough fight. The House Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee decreased its spending limit to reflect \$18 billion less than their allocation in FY2011 or equivalent to FY2004 levels and \$41.6 billion less than what was included in President Obama's budget he submitted to Congress earlier this year. Last month, NBGMAC signed-on to an [HIV community letter](#) to the Senate urging protection of HIV/AIDS programs and the health care safety net during consideration of the FY2012 budget resolution and other potential deficit reduction measures. NBGMAC continues to be very engaged in coalition activities to increase the overall resources available for prevention and care and treatment that impact Black gay men.

Young Men of Color Funding Opportunity

In April, NBGMAC released a survey to members to solicit information around the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC), [funding opportunity announcement](#) (FOA) for HIV/AIDS prevention services focused on young MSM and transgender persons of color. This FOA is consistent with CDC's overall shift in emphasis on identifying HIV positive individuals and targeting interventions to HIV positive persons. The funding opportunity builds on the National HIV/AIDS Strategy's call to employ high-impact, game-changing interventions to reduce new infections among Black gay men.

Preliminary findings from the survey highlight mixed reviews in terms of member opinions on the FOA's aggressive four (4) percent prevalence rate target. Six (6) survey respondents (n=15) noted their agency's intent to apply for funding under the FOA. When asked the question: "With respect to requirements in CDC's YMSM and transgender funding grant, do you think your agency would be able to achieve a four (4) percent undiagnosed positivity rate in your community?" nine (9) or 60 percent of survey respondents noted their organization would be able to meet the aggressive target. NBGMAC members have expressed concern about this target and whether it is realistic for Black gay community-based agencies to obtain. NBGMAC plans to share final survey information with CDC leadership to ensure that funded organizations are supported in their efforts to reach Black gay men across the country.

NBGMAC and CDC Leadership Discuss Black Gay Capacity

Last year, NBGMAC's Executive Committee (EC) participated in a conference call with Kevin Fenton - Director, National Center on HIV, Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP); Janet Cleveland - Deputy Director, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention; and Rashad Burgess - Director, Capacity Building Branch, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to discuss the disproportionate burden of HIV among Black gay men and efforts to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to meet existing and future community needs. The call took place approximately a month after new CDC data revealed that as of 2008 the rate of new HIV infections among men who have sex with men (MSM) nationwide is more than 44 times higher than HIV infections among other men, and 40 times higher than HIV infections among women. Two months later, results of HIV testing conducted among MSM in 21 cities were published in CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) which indicated that 19 percent of MSM who were tested in 2008 were HIV-positive; of these 44 percent were unaware that they were infected. Further analysis clarified that the largest increase in HIV incidence is occurring among young Black and Latino MSM.

The EC focused their questions to CDC leadership on plans to sustain and build infrastructure among organizations led by Black gay men embedded in communities where Black gay men live. The EC was interested in the federal government's assessment of organizational capacity, evaluation, and engagement in technical assistance. Kevin Fenton has recently responded with a thoughtful letter explaining CDC's recent HIV prevention efforts targeted to Black MSM. You can read the [letter here](#). NBGMAC needs to hear from you, please send any feedback you may have to info@NBGMAC.org.

HHS Funding Meeting to Support the National HIV/AIDS Strategy

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will convene a meeting next Monday, June 21 to hear from a cross-section of partners, both governmental and non-governmental, about the potential uses of National HIV/AIDS Strategy implementation funds which may become available to the Office of the Secretary, HHS in FY2012. The President's FY2012 budget authorizes the Secretary of HHS to transfer one (1) percent of HIV/AIDS program funding to support innovative, cross-agency collaboration. This consultation will provide an opportunity to share perspectives on how best to use these funds, in the event that they become available in FY2012. Key questions for consideration include:

- What are the high priority unmet capacity development needs to achieve the NHAS?
- What are the high priority unmet research and data needs to achieve the NHAS?
- How might new funds be used to stimulate and sustain critical partnerships across and outside government?
- How might new funds be used to enhance the national response to HIV by facilitating coordination and communication, developing common measures, and streamlining reporting requirements?

NBGMAC leadership is participating in this important meeting. Please contact [Terrance Moore](#) or [Kali Lindsey](#) to share your thoughts on these key questions prior to the meeting.

HHS LGTB Meeting

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) convened a consultation with representatives from national lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community organizations on March 17-18, 2011 to discuss HIV prevention strategies in a broader, social context of health promotion/health equity. You can read the [meeting summary here](#). The consultation focused on the [National HIV/AIDS Strategy's](#) (NHAS) goal of reducing new HIV infections. The NHAS calls for the nation to re-orient HIV prevention efforts by giving more attention and focus to the populations at highest risk of HIV infection, including gay and bisexual men. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), gay men comprise approximately two (2) percent of the U.S. population, but over half (53 percent) of new infections. Among gay men, Black gay men bear a disproportionate burden of new HIV infections. As a participant in the consultation, NBGMAC continues to dialogue and provide recommendations to HHS and other federal agencies around the unique prevention, research and care needs of Black gay men in NHAS implementation.

NBGMAC Policy Committee Call

NBGMAC will hold a Policy Committee call on Tuesday, June 28 at 3:00 PM (EDT). This first call will include key FY2011-2012 funding and policy updates. Additionally, key priority activities for this year, including updating NBGMAC's seminal Policy Agenda document, will be discussed. For additional information and/or to RSVP for this call, please contact [Terrance Moore](#) or [Kali Lindsey](#).