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L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center Responds to White House HIV/AIDS Strategy

Center Expands Free HIV Testing Services to Test 10% More People Each Year

LOS ANGELES, July 14, 2010—The White House released on Tuesday a national strategy for slowing the rate of new infections, increasing the number of people who are tested for HIV and making medical care more accessible for those who are HIV-positive. It calls for reducing new HIV infections by 25% within five years.

L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center Chief of Staff Darrel Cummings issued the following statement on Wednesday:

“At long last—nearly three decades into the HIV/AIDS epidemic—the White House has unveiled a National AIDS Strategy. We applaud President Obama for this historic and important step in the right direction.

In a nearly revolutionary move, the federal government is finally acknowledging what’s been sadly apparent during the 30 years we’ve watched this disease take a horrific toll on our country: HIV is a disease that dramatically and disproportionately impacts gay and bisexual men and other historically marginalized communities.

In this strategy, the White House acknowledges that gay and bisexual men of all ethnicities account for nearly three-fourths of the HIV/AIDS cases in the U.S. and that people of color, especially African-Americans, are disproportionately affected. This stands in stark contrast to Bush-era policies that failed to acknowledge the impact of the epidemic on the LGBT community—or were outright hostile toward the idea of targeted programs, which are exactly what we know is needed if we are to effectively combat this epidemic.

The President has shown leadership, and for that we commend him. Now, his leadership must continue because the nation’s ability to achieve or exceed the goals articulated in this strategy will require a serious focus by appropriate branches of government and a significant increase in federal resources.”

The Center has been a leader in HIV advocacy and treatment since its early days. Each year, the Center provides medical care for more than 1,800 people living with HIV/AIDS and HIV testing for about 12,000 people. To make HIV testing as accessible as possible, the Center this month expanded the hours that HIV testing is available at its McDonald/Wright building in Hollywood; free testing is now offered on a walk-in basis from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. each Monday through Friday. This will allow the Center to provide free testing to 10% more people each year.

About the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center

The L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center provides a broad array of services for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community, welcoming nearly a quarter-million client visits from ethnically diverse youth and adults each year. Through its Jeffrey Goodman Special Care Clinic and on-site pharmacy, the Center offers free and low-cost health, mental health, HIV/AIDS medical care and HIV/STD testing and prevention. The Center also offers legal, social, cultural, and educational services, with unique programs for seniors, families and youth, including a 24-bed transitional living program for homeless youth. Information about the Gay & Lesbian Center is available on the Web at www.lagaycenter.org.