



Brother to Brother

Inspiration

From a Black Woman
to a Black Man
(An Excerpt)

The pit has been dark
The walls have been steep
I look through your anguish
Down into your soul
And know that together
We can be made whole

~ Maya Angelou

National Conference Schedule

Ujima Skills-Building Conference
Jackson, Miss. July 10-13, 2003

National GMOC Institute
Atlanta, Ga. July 24-26, 2003

2003 National HIV Prevention Conference
Atlanta, Ga. July 27-30, 2003

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SOUTHERN AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEN'S CBA PROJECT

Action reports address HIV crisis among black MSM

The National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released reports about HIV Prevention in minority communities — namely men who have sex with men (MSM) as well as the African-American and Latino communities.

NASTAD's monograph, released Dec. 5, focuses on HIV in the African-American community, with recommendations from state and local AIDS directors and health departments.

African-American MSM are particularly hard-hit, with rates of new HIV infections in some cities as high as those now seen in South Africa.

"HIV/AIDS: African-American Perspectives and Recommendations for State and Local AIDS Directors and Health Departments," was developed by NASTAD's African-American Advisory Committee. The organization hopes it will be used as a tool to help boost the response of state and local health departments to what has become an AIDS crisis in the African-American community.

"This document comes at a critical time to point our membership in the right direction for strengthening state and local efforts to meet the diverse HIV prevention and care needs of African-

American communities," says Dr. Mark O. Loveless, Oregon AIDS director and NASTAD chairman.

Similar issues were discussed in a report issued by the CDC in November, "No Turning Back: Addressing the HIV Crisis Among Men Who Have Sex With Men."

In the report the CDC notes that MSM continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV, with an estimated 42 percent of new HIV cases infecting MSM. Of particular concern are young African-American and Latino MSM. "African American MSM are particularly hard-hit,

with rates of new HIV infections in some cities as high as those now seen in South Africa," according to the report.

"Young Latino MSM are also heavily affected, with

AIDS incidence rates 2.5 times higher than white MSM."

The NASTAD monograph offers steps that state and local health departments can take to address the challenges associated with addressing HIV/AIDS in the African-American community. The monograph is available on the NASTAD Web site.

"Health departments and AIDS directors have a responsibility to take leadership and address the AIDS crisis in African-American communities.

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Gay and bi men less likely to disclose they have HIV

By J. Garbo

(Durban, South Africa) A significant number of gay and bisexual men with HIV do not disclose their serostatus to partners with whom they have unprotected sex, according to a study presented July 13 at the XIII International AIDS Conference.

Researchers from the University of California, San Francisco studied a nationwide sample of 1,397 HIV-Infected men and women receiving medical treatment. The study was conducted from September to December 1998. Around 16 percent of gay and bisexual men reported having



unprotected anal or vaginal sex at least once within the previous six months without disclosing their serostatus.

By contrast, around 5 percent of heterosexual men and around 6 percent of heterosexual women reported unprotected anal or vaginal sex without disclosure during the same time period.

Substantially different rates of nondisclosure were reported among gay and bisexual men with casual sex partners versus those with steady ones, according to the study. Thirty-six percent of those who reported unprotected oral, anal or vaginal sex did not disclose their serostatus to casual sex partners, compared to 13 percent of heterosexual men and around 9 percent of heterosexual women. Nondisclosure to steady partners, however, dropped to around 5 percent among gay and bisexual men, similar to rates found among heterosexuals with steady partners.

“The good news is that most HIV-positive people — gay men, straight men and straight women — are either abstinent or have sex only with disclosure. The disconcerting part is that for some groups in a casual relationship, they’re not telling their partner,” says Dr. Dan Ciccarone, M.P.H., the study’s principal investigator, as reported July 15 by *The San Francisco Examiner*.

The researchers call for further studies to explore why higher rates of nondisclosure were found among gay and bisexual men.

Source: <http://www.gayhealth.com>

HIV rates increase for first year in decade; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention call for prevention, testing

Overall, the rate of new HIV diagnoses in 25 states increased by 80 percent between 1999 and 2001, from 15,754 to 16,949, according to Dr. Ronald O. Valdiserri, M.P.H., deputy director of CDC’s National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention (NCHSTP).

Valdiserri presented the data on Feb. 11 at the 10th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections.

The number of HIV diagnoses increased by 14 percent among men who have sex with men (MSM), from 6,614 to 7,521. The numbers also increased among heterosexuals by 10 percent, from 4,973 to 5,468. The data, collected from 25 states with longstanding HIV reporting, did not include states with high prevalence of HIV including New York and California, said Valdiserri. He warned that while important, the information is not representative of the entire nation.

“Medical care providers must play an active role in HIV prevention efforts if we are to achieve a reduction in the incidence of new HIV infections in the United States,” Valdiserri said at the conference. “Uninfected and undiagnosed patients need information about HIV risk and HIV testing, while patients diagnosed with HIV need counseling and support to help them protect their partners from infection.”

Some MSM may believe that HIV is no longer a threat since the advent of strong and effective antiviral medications. The challenges of medication adherence, however,

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Action reports address HIV crisis continued...

An important step that AIDS directors can take to fulfill their responsibility to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS in African-American communities, is to educate themselves about the complex historical underpinnings that inform the AIDS crisis in the African-American communities today," the NASTAD report states. "AIDS directors, who understand the historical underpinnings surrounding African-Americans and HIV/AIDS can better develop, implement and strengthen plans to respond to the epidemic in African-American communities."

A workshop was also being hosted by NASTAD from Dec. 5 to Dec. 7 in Washington, D.C., to address African-American perspectives of the public health system and strategies for partnering with African-American communities.

HIV rates increase continued...

go far beyond simply popping a pill like a vitamin daily. For many taking antiviral medications, there are side effects ranging from nausea and diarrhea to exhaustion and insomnia. There may also be dietary restrictions, and you can develop a drug resistant virus or may already have drug resistance that renders medications ineffective.

Increased rates of syphilis among MSM in New York, Los Angeles and Miami also have the CDC and other public health officials concerned, indicating an increase in risky sexual behavior.

"It shows the magnitude of the challenge of promoting safe sex and the message of prevention," Ronald Johnson, associate executive director of Gay Men's Health Crisis told *The New York Times* on Jan. 31.

The majority of people with HIV are sexually active, according to findings initially presented at the 2002 International AIDS Conference in Barcelona.

There were 1,656 HIV-positive individuals interviewed for the CDC's multi-state Supplement to HIV/AIDS Surveillance (SHAS) Project. Interviews

When addressing factors related to the disproportionate rates, the CDC notes stigma as a major roadblock. "African-American MSM face stigma and discrimination on multiple levels. Some feel unaccepted in the predominantly white, established gay community, and many are affected by the stigma of homosexuality common across racial and ethnic groups," according to the CDC report. "This stigma, coupled with racism common in many areas, makes the challenges faced by African-American MSM particularly severe."

The report also includes an action agenda that outlines steps necessary to reach CDC's goal of cutting new infections in half over the next five years. At the top of the list of action steps is prioritizing prevention for MSM of Color. **Source:** <http://www.gayhealth.com>

were conducted between January and October 2002. Sixty-nine percent of the participants reported being sexually active and 31 percent reported being abstinent. Many of these individuals were unaware of their partner's status and did not use condoms.

Healthcare providers would recommend testing to patients, Valdiserri said, noting that many of those who had been tested did so because of illness and not because their doctor or provider recommended it.

In fact, only 6 percent of more than 7,000 people who tested positive interviewed between 1997 and 2000 said they got tested because of a recommendation from their provider.

"There are many priorities competing for a physician's time and attention, but HIV counseling and testing need not be a time-consuming process for care givers," he said. "Evidence shows that proper training can help providers smoothly incorporate HIV counseling into their practice."

Source: <http://www.gayhealth.com>

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Focus

The Southern African-American Men's Capacity-Building Assistance Project seeks to motivate, mobilize, increase participation and involvement of African-American men who have sex with other men (MSM) in the delivery of HIV prevention services and the community planning process. This project also seeks to foster collaborations and linkages of HIV prevention programs targeting African-American (MSM) with these stakeholders and community leaders.

The Southern African-American Men's Capacity-Building Assistance Project's geographical area of coverage is as follows: AL, AR, FL, KY, LA, MS, OK, TN, TX.

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Skills-Building Course Calendar

Community Mobilization.....March 22 & 23
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Community Planning.....April 19 & 20
Louisville, Kentucky

Community Mobilization.....May 16 & 17
New Orleans, Louisiana

Community Mobilization.....July 6 & 8
Nashville, Tennessee

Community Planning.....August 6 & 7
Nashville, Tennessee

For information about these courses, please call the Southern African-American Men's Capacity-Building Assistance Project, toll-free, at 1-866-JSU-MURC (578-6872).



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