

TASK FORCE Connections

the quarterly technical assistance newsletter of the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention

FALL 1994

Colleagues —

Greetings and welcome to the first edition of Task Force Connections, the voice of the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention. This new publication will come to you regularly to provide updated information about the NTFAP and important news from the struggle.

Over the last few months, we've undergone tremendous changes. As you know, Reggie Williams, our Founding Executive Director, resigned in February to relocate to Amsterdam. The months that followed haven't been easy. We moved to a new site in San Francisco, greatly expanded our Board, hired a number of new staff and went through a myriad of other changes you don't even want to hear about. All of this was in addition to the daily changes and losses that are the standard fare of living life in the midst of an epidemic.

NTFAP is still here for you and we've reorganized ourselves to provide you with even better services. As the new Executive Director, I pledge to you that we'll continue in our commitment to build a movement run by and for gay men of color. We will continue to honor and build on the work of those men who have done this work before us — men like Douglas Yarron and Brandy Moore, both of whom have recently passed away. This edition of Connections is dedicated to them. There is not enough space to relate all their contributions in building this movement. Sometimes tears are not enough.

It is our hope you will find this newsletter a valuable tool. We could not do this work without you. Do the right thing.

Peace, Randy Miller

4th Gay Men of Color AIDS Institute a Resounding Success!

Over 275 gay men of color from over 200 ASOs and CBOs from nearly 60 cities gathered at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago, September 29 through October 2 to attend and contribute to the Fourth Annual Gay Men of Color AIDS Institute. This year marked another milestone as over \$50,000 in scholarships were provided to recipients.

As we already know, Gay Men of Color continue to be the most underserved among government-sponsored HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programming. And nationally, Gay Men of Color make up about 20% of all AIDS cases. For these and many other reasons, this institute was yet another historically important event in our continuing battle against HIV.

Plenary speakers included Phill Wilson, public policy director APLA; Mario Solis-Marich, co-chair, National LLEGO; Alexander Robinson, ACLU lobbyist and NTFAP Board President; Carlos Velez, National AIDS Policy Office; Andy Spieldenner, youth advocate; and Dr. German Maisonet.

A major issue reported during the forum was that local prevention planning councils are not including gay men of color as a priority or as members of local prevention councils. These councils are critically important in our local communities as gay men

of color continue to become infected. Steve Wakefield, NTFAP board member and interim Executive Director of Night Ministry in Chicago, remarked, "We really need to make changes and inform the CDC together that this prevention planning process isn't working."

This type of institute offers to gay, bisexual, and transgendered individuals in people of color communities opportunities to disseminate strategies for treatment options, treatment and prevention education, and creation of advocacy, prevention, and treatment networks and support groups at the national level. Through plenary sessions, workshops, panel discussions, and ethnic-specific caucuses, we covered broad issues such as empowerment, racial issues, community and organization building, health care,

advocacy & policy issues, gay youth, and treatment issues.

The 1995 Gay Men of Color AIDS Summit will be held in San Francisco. The format will change somewhat so as to convene a diverse group of gay men of color nationally and produce broad agendas that serve all our ethnic communities. Those wishing to be included in our mailing list are urged to update their names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers with a National Task Force staff person.

"We really need to make changes and inform the CDC together that their prevention planning process isn't working," says Steve Wakefield, NTFAP Board of Directors.

National Technical Assistance and Training Program Launched

by Garry Morrow-Hall

If you were to make a visit to the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention officers, you might notice several things right away. The most obvious is that our officers have moved to a newer and more spacious location.

The second thing you might notice is the staff. In the past year, NTEAP has gone through a period of unprecedented growth, and nowhere is that growth more evident than when you look at the national staff.

In just the first six months of this year, Joshua Volle came on as Director of Research & Evaluation, replacing Martin Ornelas, now the Director of National ILEGO's AIDS project.

William C. Bland joined our team as Assistant Director of Technical Assistance and Training. We brought back James Jondude to coordinate the 1994 Gay Men of Color AIDS Institute. Lastly, but not least, Raymond Dumas moved from the People of Color Against AIDS Network and became our Community Organizer.

Our 1994 - 95 national program will be providing much needed technical assistance, support, community organizing and training to local communities and organizations in over 21 cities from Anchorage, AK to Tampa, FL. We have had invitations from three state health departments to conduct on-site technical assistance in their communities.

The national program—designed to provide technical assistance and training—has four components to it. The first is the Annual Gay Men of Color AIDS Institute. 1994 marks the fourth year for this historically important forum. This is an opportunity for a national level to network and share with other gay men of color from around the country.

Secondly, the national program develops organizations which are composed of, or wish to target, African American gay and bisexual men. This program will serve at least 15 organizations in 14 cities in 1994.

Thirdly, it focuses on the Southern States AIDS Education Survey Project where action plans are developed for gay men of color communities in seven cities in five states. This component is a community organizing and assessment follow-up tool, an outgrowth of the original survey implementation in 1991.

And, fourth, it organizes gay men of color communities around the nation by working with six organizations in New York, LA, Chicago and Oklahoma City. This project was developed to help fill the gap experienced in these cities as identified in a US Conference of Mayors report, "Assessing the HIV Prevention Needs of Gay Men of Color."

These three components utilize a combination of community and organizational assessments, in-person interview focus groups, and workshops and trainings.

Although the national program has grown and offers a more diverse program than ever before, one fact remains: NTEAP is dedicated to ending the AIDS epidemic by advocating for and assisting in the development of HIV education and service programs that are created, implemented and evaluated by and for gay and bisexual men of color! If you would like to know more about or participate in our national technical assistance and training program, please contact our offices in San Francisco.

A Call to Action

by Raymond E. Dumas, Sr.

After almost a decade and a half into the AIDS epidemic, gay men of color continue to be adversely affected by the ravages and tragedy of HIV disease. Fortunately, there were individuals who early on recognized the potential devastation for gay men of color and heeded the call for action to insist that they not be forgotten. In the early scurry to

develop prevention strategies, these pioneers, who were gay men of color—often found they were forced to deal with the harsh realities of an AIDS diagnosis in their own bodies. These visionaries formed the beginning of community organizing to impede the spread of HIV in gay men of color.

They insisted that strategies aimed at communities of color be culturally relevant and language specific. They worked long, hard, and in most cases, unpaid hours to ensure that members of their communities were empowered with

information which would ultimately save their lives.

We are forever indebted to those men for their foresight, courage and dedication. Their reconnaissance mission has uncovered a larger, potentially devastating war than even they imagined. Institutionalized racism and homophobia, religious oppression and lack of the

sense of community continue to marginalize gay men of color. The HIV/AIDS war has escalated in our communities. Our soldiers who remain in the struggle are weary, while too many have succumbed in the fight.

A new battle cry is sounded. Gay men of color—students, teachers, preachers, leather queens and drag queens—are needed to organize in our own way, in our own communities, to save our own lives! Essex Hemphill's poem "For My Own Protection" speaks to a call for action from within the ranks of gay men of color:

In the early scurry to develop prevention strategies, these pioneers, who were gay men of color, often found that they were forced to deal with the harsh realities of an AIDS diagnosis in their own bodies.

Join Our Waiting List!

If there is someone you know who would like a copy of *Connections*, then please let us know and we'll add them to our mailing list. Just write to us at NTEAP, 944 Market Street, Suite 210, SF, CA 94102, or (415) 403-3808.

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NTEAP MISSION STATEMENT

NTEAP is a National Minority Organization dedicated to ending the AIDS epidemic by advocating for and assisting in the development of HIV education and service programs by and for gay and bisexual men of color.

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Warriors Not Forgotten

"Within the wars we are all waging with the forces of death, subtle and otherwise, conscious or not—I am not only a casualty, I am also a warrior."

Audre Lorde

BRANDY MOORE

1949 - 14 October 1994

William J. "Brandy" Moore, a long-time San Francisco political activist, passed away from AIDS, Friday, October 14, 1994.

Brandy worked to bridge communities together around a variety of issues, most notably HIV/AIDS. Although he briefly worked as a model, his passion was public service and liberal politics. From the beginning of the AIDS crisis in San Francisco, Brandy became and remained until his death one of the first voices in the Black community to stress targeted HIV prevention education.

Brandy worked to improve the quality of life for all San Francisco residents and created a better understanding of the issues which face African Americans and gay and lesbian people.

His absence will be sorely felt throughout the city.

DOUGLAS YARANON

13 January 1957 - 6 August 1994

Douglas was born in Bordeaux, France and grew up in Pritsburg, California. He received his BA from New College and his Masters from UC Berkeley.

Douglas served as consultant, project evaluator and director of numerous HIV projects, and was last employed by NTEAP. Throughout his years of community service, Douglas worked tirelessly for the cause of equality and freedom through civil rights advocacy and community education.

Douglas served as co-chair of the Gay Asian Pacific Alliance, San Francisco. As was his demeanor in all his endeavors, he took the challenge head on. Douglas' sense of commitment to our communities, as well as his vision of what could be, was inspirational and proved instrumental in guiding many towards a more productive future.

We miss him deeply.

For My Own Protection

Essex Hemphill, reprinted from his book, *Ceremonies*

I want to start
an organization
to save my life.
If whistles, snails,
dogs, cats,
Christy, and Nixon
can be saved,
then the lives of black men
are priceless
and can be saved.
We should be able
to save each other.
I don't want to wait
for the Heritage Foundation
to release a study

sitting Black men
are almost extinct.
I don't want to be
the living dead
pacified with drugs
and sex.

If a human chain
around missile sites,
around nuclear sites,
then surely Black men
can form human chains
around harassment, Harlem,
South Africa, Wall Street,
Hollywood, each other.

If we have to take tomorrow
with our blood are we
ready?
Do our S cards,
dreadlocks, and Phillips
make us any more ready
than a bush or conkline?
I'm not concerned
about the attire of a soldier.
All I want to know
for my own protection
is are we capable
of whatever,
whenever?

The Winds of Change

by Kerrington Osborne

The times they are a-changin'. The refrain from that old Dylan song is really applicable to what has been happening to HIV prevention in the United States. After many years we are finally beginning to see some long overdue changes at the federal level. The federal government appears to be wading into the HIV disease infected waters in which many of us have been swimming, floating, and in some cases drowning, for more than a decade. It is not quite a life raft but at least we have an administration that is willing to get its feet wet. It is still not enough (for example, the President's 1995 fiscal year budget did not include an increase in funding for HIV prevention), but there have been some significant changes in policy.

Gone are the days of the Jesse Helm's sponsored content restrictions on HIV prevention messages. Gone are the days when 60% of federal HIV prevention dollars had to go to testing and counseling programs. Gone are the days in which the state or local health department alone decided how to target HIV prevention messages and to whom. Gone are the days when gay men of color were an invisible population within the HIV epidemic.

Today the content of prevention messages is measured by the community standards of the target population. Today health departments must work with advocates, providers, affected and infected communities to determine what are priority populations and priority interventions for HIV prevention within local jurisdictions. Today the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has funded both research and organizations which specifically targets gay men of color. Yes, it is indeed a new day, but our work is really just beginning.

While these changes are positive, there is no denying that the epidemic is still raging out of control within gay men of color populations. Needs assessments and gay men of color organizations alone can not erase a decade of neglect. Many of our communities still do not have adequate resources to effectively combat the HIV epidemic. The only way this will change is by our becoming players in the policy arena. We must be at the table when policy decisions are made that affect our communities, organizations, and lives. The recent implementation of HIV Prevention Community Planning is a prime example.

Earlier this year the CDC issues guidance to all of its cooperative agreement recipients (all fifty states, seven cities and all US territories) that mandated the implementation of a community planning process. The guidance called for the establishment of community planning groups comprised of local health officials, infected individuals, affected communities, prevention providers, researchers and others. The task of these planning groups is to develop a comprehensive HIV prevention plan for the local jurisdiction. That plan will detail high priority prevention

strategies and interventions targeted to defined populations. In short these planning groups will make prevention policy recommendations for their local jurisdiction. That is a lot of power. It is crucial that the voices of gay men of color be heard throughout the process.

In order for Prevention Plans to include us, we must ensure that we get to the table to influence the decision making process. We must be among the members of the planning groups. We must be present at community forums. We must attend meetings and make public comments even if we are not members. We must forward studies, surveys and other data about our populations to the planning groups. The information and knowledge we have must be shared with the planning groups. This may seem like a lot of work—that's because it is. However, if we do not take on the task there is no guarantee that others will do it for us.

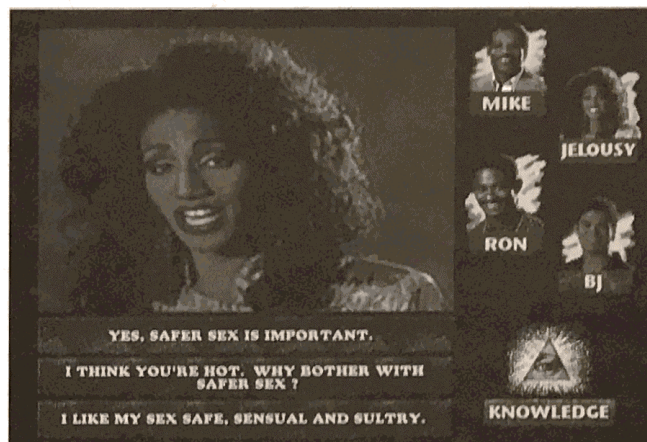
HIV Prevention Community Planning is happening now, and will be an ongoing process. The opportunity for participation will be there and we must take advantage of it. We can make a difference and begin to redress the many years of neglect.

A Call to Action: Join the Gay Men of Color Action Network. Fax your name, ethnicity, address, phone & fax numbers to Kerrington Osborne, NTFAP to receive policy information and action alerts on issues affecting Gay Men of Color.

(415.403.3814. Fax 415.403.3809.

Since launching their operations in 1992, the Brothers Network is an HIV institution created by people of African descent dedicated to the health and well being of transgender persons, bisexuals and gay men. They are an institution about keeping our brothers and sisters alive, safe, creative and vibrant. They have given birth to and will maintain a strong, compassionate, risk taking, humane, trusting, healing, respectful, dedicated, and positive organization comprised of people who refuse to believe that transgenders, bisexual and gay men of African descent must continue to be infected at higher rates than any other Black, bisexual, transgender or gay population in San Francisco.

An African American-specific organization, Brothers implements a continuum of services that speak to the experiences of Black/African American gay/bisexual men and transgendered persons. Using the existing HIV risk reduction models of the NTFAP, Brothers is striving to serve its population by drawing upon community organizing strategies to augment one-on-one and small group strategies.



The Network provides health outreach; prevention case management services for high-risk, HIV-negative men; support groups; transportation assistance; and treatment advocacy. Other services include risk reduction, self-esteem, leadership workshops/trainings, special events and volunteer services. The program is supported through various funding sources: city health department, non-government sources, individual donations and foundations such as the Magic Johnson Foundation. Together, this myriad of funding sources has enabled San Francisco to create a unique and ethnic-specific service program.

The Interactive Video, *Brothers: An Innovation in Outreach and Intervention*, is one of their recent innovations in developing targeted HIV prevention speaking the language and socio-cultural norms of African-descendant gay and bisexual men. It's an interactive video, a catalyst for exploring issues that confront these men around HIV. Utilizing a combination of original rap music, dramatic dialogues, "show-n-tell" information about safer sex, resource directories and the humor that is part of the Black gay experience, the kiosk is an effective and engaging outreach tool. Story lines include scenarios with youth, HIV-positive men, and transgendered persons. This educational methodology can go beyond its role as an outreach tool and realize its potential as a complete prevention intervention. It was developed by NTFAP for Brothers, and other groups are attempting to raise funds to replicate it for other populations.

Toward ensuring future working relationships, Brothers is developing outreach materials to target: homeless services; substance use recovery/treatment program; spirituality; Black/African American community based HIV/AIDS service organizations; social service referrals; services for gay men, bisexual men and men who love men; services for transgenders; and the Safer Sex Club scene.

The Brothers Network is an idea whose time has come. Those with the compassion, dedication, intelligence, street savvy, political and moral commitment to curb AIDS among transgenders, bisexual men and gay men of African descent can be found amongst us.

Listen Up America!

by Raymond E. Dumas, Sr.

*Listen Up America!
We are many voices
and although you say
you can't understand the articulation of our speech
you will hear us . . . and understand
that we will not be silenced!*

*after all, we heard your own discarded children proclaim
SILENCE=DEATH!*

*We are many voices
whether we speak to you
in Chinese, Spanish or so called "broken English"
Ya'll will hear us . . . and understand
the language of a DIVA SNAP!*

*We are many voices
and although you say we talk too loud . . .
that there's no need for us to become so "emotional"
You will hear us!
because even with the volume of our screams . . .
after fifteen years . . . you still don't get it!*

*We have shed too many tears
and have lost far too many precious lives
to be silent now.*

*You may refuse to hear our voices
but you will hear our heartbeat!
Everytime one voice is silenced
by your unwillingness to fund prevention messages
that are culturally relevant and language specific
OUR HEARTBEAT GETS LOUDER!*

*Everytime one of our brothers is forced
to return to his reservation for nurturing
because your overt racism refuses to provide a place for him
in your health care system
OUR HEARTBEAT GETS LOUDER!*

*And every time you disown another brother
and allow your wicked homophobia
force him to suffer and die . . . alone . . . without a sense of home
OUR HEARTBEAT GETS LOUDER . . . AND STRONGER!*

*Listen up America
We Gay Men of Color
are truly . . . many voices . . . one heartbeat!
NOW HEAR THAT!*

FIRST CLASS

address correction requested

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National Task Force on AIDS Prevention

