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HIV Among Issues Examined During White House's United State of Women Summit

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Summary: Find out how ONAP, and Federal and community partners, marked the first United State of Women Summit to highlight HIV issues among women and girls.

Last week, thousands of people gathered for the United State of Women, a White House summit focused on the needs of women and girls. Employing the theme, "Today, We'll Change Tomorrow," the event highlighted priorities such as health and wellness, violence against women, and economic empowerment, celebrating what we've achieved, identifying the challenges that remain, and pointing the way forward. We at the [Office of National AIDS Policy](#) were honored to take part in the summit.

ADDRESSING HIV/AIDS IN WOMEN AND GIRLS: LESSONS LEARNED AT HOME AND ABROAD

Our first event was a Solutions Seminar on June 14, where we had a high-level discussion about the successes and challenges women and girls are experiencing both domestically and abroad. In Amy's opening remarks, she provided context for the U.S. response to HIV globally, through the PEPFAR program, and in the United States, through the National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

Ambassador Deborah L. Birx, M.D., the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and U.S. Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy, moderated a panel discussion that included:

- Mary Bowman, Poet, Singer and Advocate
- Dázon Dixon Diallo, President/Chief Executive Officer, SisterLove, Inc.
- Dr. Helene Gayle, Chief Executive Officer, McKinsey Social Initiative
- Nancy Mahon, Senior Vice President, Global Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability, The Estée Lauder Companies/Global Executive Director, M.A.C AIDS FUND, M.A.C Cosmetics
- Debra Messing, Global Ambassador, Population Services International

Their discussion provided attendees with numerous solutions to take back to their communities:

- **Engaging those who are affected by HIV** but are not typically involved in policy discussions
- Embedding strategies for **addressing interconnected factors like economic well-being and violence** into HIV prevention and care efforts
- Making personal commitments to **share the stories of people living with HIV** both in the U.S. and abroad

IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL HIV/AIDS STRATEGY: ADVANCES, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND FUTURE ACTIONS FOR WOMEN

On June 15th, our second forum was held at The George Washington University (GWU), and highlighted Federal and community efforts to implement the [National HIV/AIDS Strategy: Updated to 2020](#) and improve HIV outcomes among women in the United States—particularly women of color and transgender women. We were fortunate to start the event with a warm welcome from Dr. Lynn Goldman and Dr. Jeffrey Akman, Dean of the Milken Institute School of Public Health and Dean of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, respectively.

Cecilia Muñoz, Assistant to the President and Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, then set the stage for the event, noting that the updated Strategy builds on the strengths of the President's 2010 Strategy and incorporates groundbreaking new scientific research and policy developments, such as the protections offered through the Affordable Care Act and the recommendations of the Federal Interagency Working Group on the Intersection of HIV/AIDS, Violence Against Women and Girls, and Gender-Related Health Disparities.

Moderated by Dr. Maggie Czarnogorski, Deputy Director of Comprehensive Women's Health at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the first panel focused on the HIV prevention and treatment needs of women in the U.S. and featured:

- Dr. Vignetta Charles, Chief Science Officer, ETR Associates
- Dr. Erin Falvey, Executive Director, Christie's Place
- Heather Hauck, Deputy Associate Administrator, Health Resources and Services Administration's HIV/AIDS Bureau
- Dr. Leslie Kantor, Vice President of Education, Planned Parenthood Federation of America

These leaders' remarks coalesced around some key themes of how individuals and organizations can implement the Strategy for women and girls by:

- **Engaging with schools and school systems** to promote comprehensive sexual education.
- **Creating and sustaining partnerships** to address HIV, including with organizations that may not traditionally be engaged in HIV activities.

- Using **data to target resources** to those communities in which HIV is concentrated, including African American women, Latinas, and transgender women.
- Ensuring the **voices of women living with HIV** are represented in the design, implementation, and assessment of our programs as well as in leadership roles.
- Developing approaches that reflect a **trauma-informed model of care**.
- And, above all, **having ongoing conversations about HIV** and its impact on women and girls with our friends, family members, colleagues, and fellow citizens.

The panelists reminded us that a dedicated, intentional focus on HIV among women and girls is vital if we are to meet our National HIV/AIDS Strategy goals. As a complement to what they shared, we were able to spotlight two new Federal HIV initiatives announced that week:

- The HHS Office on Women's Health released [HIV Prevention Toolkit: A Gender-Responsive Approach](#), a resource for health departments and other organizations that are involved with HIV prevention program for women and girls.
- The U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [announced more than \\$9 million to support eight local programs](#) across the country working to protect and house victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking who are living with HIV/AIDS.

In addition, during her remarks, Ms. Hauck highlighted a [new funding opportunity announcement](#) recently issued by HRSA, with support from the Secretary's Minority AIDS Initiative Fund, that will support leadership training for people of color living with HIV, specifically including transgender women of color.

NEW HIV AWARENESS CAMPAIGN FOR TRANSGENDER WOMEN

Following the panel, we were treated to a sneak preview of the forthcoming Greater Than AIDS campaign, [Empowered: Trans Women & HIV](#). The new public information campaign from the Kaiser Family Foundation seeks to bring greater understanding to the issues faced by transgender women in relation to HIV risk, prevention, and care. As Tina Hoff, the Foundation's Senior Vice President, reminded us, transgender women are among those with the highest burden of HIV, as more than one in four transgender women and more than half of Black trans women are living with HIV.

Campaign Ambassadors Blossom Brown and Phoebe VanCleeve shared their own reflections on the need to talk openly about the impact of HIV on transgender women. As Ms. Brown noted, "I share my story in hopes that others will know that it's OK. HIV is not a death sentence, and I want to inspire others. You never know who you will inspire with your words."

We walked away from this event truly inspired and urge you to embrace Ms. Brown's words as your own charge – Speak out about HIV among women and girls. Raise your voice about the critical need to help

women get tested, linked to and in treatment and care. Combat HIV-related stigma. And inspire others to take action to prevent new HIV infections among women and girls.

[from Amy: I would like to say a big thank you to Caira for designing and organizing both sessions. She was engaged from the very first discussions through the last person leaving the GWU event, making sure that HIV issues were on the agenda for the Summit and ensuring our ONAP event was a success. Caira brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, passion, and creativity to her new role at ONAP and to women's health issues.]

For more about the United State of Women summit, see First Lady Michelle Obama's Blog Post, [Together We Are Stronger](#) and view the White House [United State of Women Video](#). Make your own pledge of how you're going to change our tomorrow at www.theunitedstateofwomen.org/pledge-generator/.

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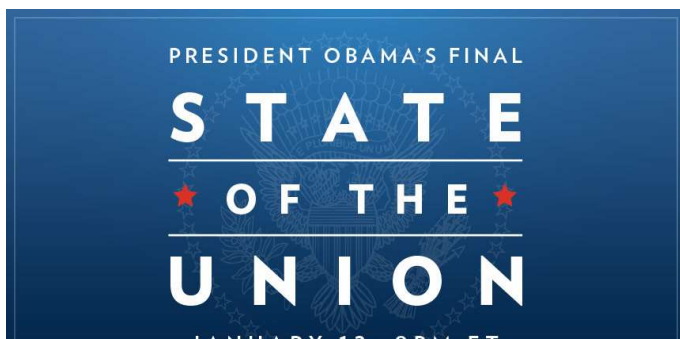
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