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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES ■ National Institutes of Health  
**National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)**

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**February 7, 2007**

This is one of the periodic messages you will receive during the year from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health. We hope this announcement may be of interest to your organization and its constituents.

In commemoration of the seventh annual National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day on February 7, 2007, Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., director of NIAID, issued the statement below. This day of recognition reminds us of the devastation that HIV/AIDS continues to inflict on African American communities that have long been disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS.

Please feel free to share this release with your organization and its constituents. Here is the URL:  
<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/about/directors/news/nbhaaid2007.htm>.

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### **Statement of Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases on National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day February 7, 2007**

On February 7th, we commemorate the seventh annual National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day. This day of recognition reminds us of the devastation that HIV/AIDS continues to inflict on African American communities. Although African Americans account for only 13 percent of the U.S. population, in 2005 they represented approximately 50 percent of new HIV/AIDS diagnoses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that more than 211,000 African Americans with AIDS have died since the epidemic began. African Americans have long been disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, and that disparity has only deepened over time.

Scientists supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), in collaboration with colleagues around the world, continue to unlock the mysteries of HIV/AIDS and develop new strategies to prevent infection and to treat people living with HIV. Over the years research advances have positively affected lives of individuals and communities, here and abroad. Recent analyses suggest that at least 3 million years of life have been saved in the United States since the advent of combination antiretroviral therapy in the mid-1990s, highlighting the significant advances made in the treatment of HIV-infected individuals.

Scientists are now working to improve the treatment of HIV-infected people by developing new drugs and by defining the optimal use of current drugs. At the same time, NIH-supported researchers are making significant progress in developing new tools of HIV prevention, such as topical microbicides that individuals could use to protect themselves against acquisition of HIV infection. Promising research also has led to the development of multiple candidate HIV vaccines that are being testing in the United States and in countries around the world. A multifaceted and comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS that includes diagnosis, prevention, treatment and care is the best strategy to fight this epidemic, and NIH-supported scientists will continue to lead the research endeavor with their dedicated partners worldwide.

Some of the biggest challenges we face today are the misperceptions of and lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS, and fear related to clinical research, particularly among African Americans. I encourage African Americans to take part in the research effort in whatever way possible, as scientists, clinicians, community educators, advocates and study volunteers. To ensure that treatments and vaccines will work for everyone, volunteers in our clinical trials need to represent all racial and ethnic groups. As new vaccines, therapies, microbicides and other interventions enter the pipeline for clinical testing, tens of thousands of HIV-negative clinical trial volunteers will be needed. In this regard, NIAID recently initiated a new campaign to raise awareness of preventive HIV vaccine research, a campaign that includes a focus on African American communities with the hope of addressing some of these challenges (see <http://www.betheg>

[National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day is an opportunity to get involved and make a difference. Everyone should be encouraged to get tested for HIV, learn more about the disease and how it is transmitted, seek medical advice if infected, and become involved in local community efforts to educate people and fight this disease. I want to commend all the dedicated workers and the national, regional and local HIV/AIDS groups that have contributed to efforts to defeat HIV/AIDS since the disease was first identified. Now more than ever, we need to work together to end this epidemic.](#)

[Further information about National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness and Information Day is available at http://www.blackaidsday.org/](http://www.blackaidsday.org/). Information on prevention, treatment, and vaccine clinical trials is available at <http://www.aidsinfo.nih.gov>.

NIAID is a component of the National Institutes of Health. NIAID supports basic and applied research to prevent, diagnose and treat infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, influenza, tuberculosis, malaria and illness from potential agents of bioterrorism. NIAID also supports research on basic immunology, transplantation and immune-related disorders, including autoimmune diseases, asthma and allergies.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH)—*The Nation's Medical Research Agency*—includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit <http://www.nih.gov>.

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*Dr. Fauci is director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.*

**News releases, fact sheets and other NIAID-related materials are available on the NIAID Web site at <http://www3.niaid.nih.gov>.**

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