

AT CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS CONFERENCE:

CBC: AIDS plans needed for U.S.

By Sharon Egiebor
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - The Congressional Black Caucus has released an open letter calling for an end to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Black America and for the creation of a national plan to fight the disease.

Congressional leaders and representatives from the Black AIDS Institute, The National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, the National Newspaper Publishers Association, and the National Medical Association and the AIDS Council made the announcement during a Sept. 26 news conference on Capitol Hill.

The new level of action is part of the Center for Disease Control's "Heightened National Response" to HIV/AIDS in Black America.

"We're calling for a mass mobilization to end the AIDS epidemic in the African-American community, calling for the testing of 1 million Black Americans by the end of December 2008 and calling for a national AIDS plan for the United States," said Congresswoman Barbara Lee, D-Calif.

"African-Americans are getting infected and developing AIDS in a disproportionate rate and it continues. The unfortunate reality is that to be Black in America is to be at a greater risk for HIV/AIDS."

Also at the new conference, Hazel Trice Edney, editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, announced that the news service will begin a series of op-eds to be distributed to its 200 Black weekly newspapers and viewable online at www.BlackPressUSA.com.

"We're going to have people with national name recognition so that we will be sure to get our people's attention. People such as Phill Wilson, Bishop T.D. Jakes, the Marc Morials and Jesse Jacksons of our community, the Al Sharptons, the Danny Glovers and some of the esteemed congresswomen who are here today," Edney said.

"We are excited about this opportunity to save lives. Our people are dying, not knowing who will be the next one."

Presenting a \$10,000

check to NNPA Foundation Chairwoman Dorothy Leavell and NNPA Chairman John Smith to support the NNPA Op-Ed Series, Phill Wilson, executive director of the Institute, told publishers at a breakfast that people will listen to the voice of the Black Press on HIV/AIDS.

"When you write about AIDS, you save lives. When you write about AIDS, Black people go get tested. When you write about AIDS, Black people seek treatment. When you write about AIDS, you prevent Black families from being fractured by the debilitating stigma," Wilson said at the BAI/NNPA "State of AIDS in Black America" breakfast, held during NNPA's annual September board meetings.

The Black AIDS Institute also released its third report on the state of AIDS in Black America last week. The report, "We're the Ones We've Been Waiting For," details the disease's impact on African-Americans and compares the lack of national support with the response to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

Among the statistics, Black women are now 67 percent of the female population with HIV; Black men are 43 percent of the male population with HIV; African-Americans, who make up 12 percent of the American population, make up 48 percent of African-Americans living with HIV/AIDS.

"While we have come a long way dealing with this epidemic, we are nowhere near where we ought to be," said Wilson.

Launched last fall by Black leaders representing elected officials, civil rights, faith, media and entertainment and business, this ongoing campaign and BAM, the Black AIDS Mobilization initiative, is committed to ending the AIDS epidemic in Black America by 2012 by taking the following actions:

—Cut the HIV rates in Black America in half.

—Increase the number Black Americans who know their HIV status by 50 percent.

—Increase the number Black Americans in appropriate early care/treatment by 50 percent.

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Domestic, foreign items worry Blacks

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Poverty in rural America, job deficiencies for ex-offenders, educational needs for Black males, preventing the stagnation of Black politics, not enough healthcare for Black children and class wars in Black America.

These, among a string of Black equality and justice issues belie the logic of still raging a war in Iraq during last week's Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference, members said.

"We are spending a hundred billion dollars a year in Iraq, and that same money can be used to build families in America," said U.S. Rep. G. K. Butterfield, D-N.C., who co-chaired the ALC with U. S. Rep. Kendrick Meek, D-Fla.

"There are so many issues facing the African-American community, but poverty transcends all of the different issues. We've got to tackle poverty. We cannot have one out of five children in this country living in poverty. We just can't accept that. That's intolerable. And so poverty is the number one issue facing Black America."

While the Bush Administration has been determined to keep focus on the war, Butterfield says tackling economic issues here at home must continue as the top battle for America in the years beyond the ALC.

"We first need to create jobs; we need to improve our healthcare delivery system in America. The system that we have is broken and we need to fix it; but then, we've got to do some other things," said Butterfield. "We've got a full plate and we're ready to move forward. Also, we've got to fix Medicare, prescription drug coverage, and, by all means, we must end the war."

Butterfield talked to the NNPA News Service following the glitzy annual awards dinner Saturday night, among the staple events for the annual conference. This year's theme, "Unleashing Our Power," described the determination of the CBC members, including three Black chairs of major committees, the first Black majority whip, and 15 subcommittee heads, to push crucial issues despite the war.

"We are working on a tax bill that's going to bring relief to 90 million people and a lot of African-Americans are going to be the beneficiaries," said U.S. Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., chair of the House Ways and Means Committee.

Still others, citing Iraq as a primary obstacle to Black progress at home, see the war's ending as their top goal.

"Ending the occupation of Iraq and bringing our troops home is first priority," said U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif. "This country has spent a half trillion dollars on a war that did not need to be fought," said Lee. "And what I'm

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Your Horoscope Says... Oct. 4-Oct. 10

ARIES

Like-mindedness is going to be hard to achieve among your coworkers, but there are likely to be a few who see things as you do. Choose carefully and find someone to walk with you on this week's journey. Some words of encouragement might be needed to enlist the person you choose.

Soul Affirmation: My needs will be met if I just ask.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 9, 43

TAURUS

Where are you going in such a hurry? What you want you already have. Stop looking around yourself trying to find out what's missing. Nothing is missing. The best kind of discovery this week is self-discovery.

Soul Affirmation: I get because I give.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 18, 45

GEMINI

Get out and enjoy the sunshine this week. Remember that the sun is always shining somewhere in our big island home, so use your imagination if the weather isn't perfect where you are. You can still enjoy your week and the sun that is shining whether you see it or not!

Soul Affirmation: I enjoy the love that others have for me.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 25, 47

CANCER

Look for an increase in your personal prosperity this week, my little darlings. You'll either be receiving a long-overdue debt, an unexpected bonus, a lucky lottery ticket, or you may just find cash lying at your feet as you are out for a stroll. Lucky! You love feathering your nest and this week the Universe is helping you.

Soul Affirmation: Hope is future's way of shining on me this week.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 14, 21

LEO

Dive into it! Don't be intimidated by the unknown. Your adventurous spirit can take you to a new place of celebration this week. If you can, bring someone along who can celebrate in the same manner with you. Harmony and peace is the motto that you should chant when you accomplish what you want to do!

Soul Affirmation: Communication is a master key that fits many doors.

Lucky Numbers: 30, 31, 32

VIRGO

You may find that discussions at home have taken a sudden, spiritual orientation. Give everyone room to express their personal beliefs without trying to preach your point of view. Your open-mindedness helps you with deep learning this week.

Soul Affirmation: I open up to the universe. The universe opens up to me.

Lucky Numbers: 39, 49, 52

LIBRA

Feeling bold, are we? Well, go with the flow of your feelings! No other sign can call on inner courage as easily as you. Whether at home, at work, or out on the town, let your personal statements be stylish and bold!

Soul Affirmation: I give love and love gives to me.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 50, 54

SCORPIO

Strong vibrations make for a series of dramatic interactions with others this week. Practice your art with your heart, and let your energy carry you upwards to your best, highest self. Keep emotions calm.

Soul Affirmation: I know where I'm going because I know where I've been.

Lucky Numbers: 27, 38, 44

SAGITTARIUS

Restless feelings may arise over health matters, or perhaps education or

the lack of it. Do what you need to do to feel comfortable with yourself. If it involves seeing a dentist or taking a class, what's stopping you? Self-improvement can be a very enjoyable game!

Soul Affirmation: My imagination is the source of my happiness.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 23, 29

CAPRICORN

Surprises are in order this week, and you can roll with everything that comes at you unexpectedly. Healing can happen in a relationship if you just show up. That's power! Use it for the good of others.

Soul Affirmation: This week is the week the Lord has made. I rejoice in it.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 22, 36

AQUARIUS

This week you may find yourself pulled in many directions. It's a good time to say no to certain forceful or manipulative people who know where your buttons are. You may want to focus your bountiful attention on what exactly composes your very likeable nature. What do you love about it?

Soul Affirmation: I put away useless things and cherish the gifts in my life.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 38, 52

PISCES

You want a comrade who doesn't place inordinate expectations or demands on you, and who is creative, intelligent, a good conversationalist, and highly spiritual. Perhaps you should be out looking this week with eyes wide open!

Soul Affirmation: Cooperation with others is the key to success for me this week.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 25, 41