

**Contact:**

Circe Gray Le Compte, Director of Communications

Telephone: (202) 234-5120 ext. 309 \* E-mail: [communications@nmac.org](mailto:communications@nmac.org)

**NMAC's Advocacy Institute Builds Leadership among Women of Color Fighting HIV/AIDS**

**March 9, 2007 ~ Washington, DC** ~ This March 10, the **National Minority AIDS Council** (NMAC) honors the second **annual National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day**, sponsored by **United States Department of Health's Office of Women's Health**. "The need to raise awareness about the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on women – particularly women and girls of color – cannot be overstated," says Paul Kawata, NMAC's Executive Director.

Though AIDS cases in the U.S. have decreased by 50% over the past two decades, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that the incidence of AIDS among women continues to increase. Minority women account for 80 percent of all women estimated to be living with AIDS in the U.S. today, with African-American women alone making up 64 percent of the total number of U.S. female AIDS cases.

Damon Dozier, Director of NMAC's Government Relations and Public Policy Division (GRPP) recently noted: "The disproportionate impact of AIDS among women and girls of color stems primarily from a lack of access to health care services, a situation that is all too common in minority communities. This means women and girls of color are extremely vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. They are in poorer health overall, and experience disability and death far earlier than their white counterparts."

NMAC has spearheaded a number of initiatives to mitigate this trend, most notably GRPP's Women of Color (WOC) Advocacy Institute training program, which empowers minority women to become leaders in the HIV/AIDS advocacy movement. Geared primarily to African-American, Latina/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American women impacted by and/or living with HIV/AIDS, each session teaches participants a variety of advocacy tools, including: policy writing; grassroots organizing; coalition building; and media advocacy.

Over the past year and a half, NMAC's WOC Advocacy Institute traveled to cities throughout the country, including Raleigh, North Carolina; Dallas, Texas; Miami, Florida; New York, New York; and Wilmington, DE. Five more Institutes are scheduled in 2007.

For more information about how NMAC is helping communities of color address the impact of HIV/AIDS on minority women in the U.S., visit NMAC online at [www.nmac.org](http://www.nmac.org), or contact the agency's WOC Advocacy Institute program directly at (202) 234-5120.

**About NMAC**

The National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC) was founded in 1987 to develop leadership within communities of color to address challenges of HIV/AIDS. The agency has furthered this mission by providing public policy and technical assistance trainings; national conferences;

printed and electronic publications; and a state of the art website ([www.nmac.org](http://www.nmac.org)) to minority community- and faith-based organizations (MC/FBOs), enabling them to deliver their programs and services more efficiently and effectively in their local communities. NMAC also serves as an association of AIDS service organization, providing valuable information to MC/FBOs, AIDS service organizations, hospitals, clinics and other groups helping people and families living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. NMAC's advocacy efforts are funded through private funders and donors only.

# # #