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NASTAD and APIAHF Release “Breaking Through the Silence”

**Call for Increased Focus on HIV/AIDS in Asian American,
Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Communities**

WASHINGTON, DC — The National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) and the Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) announce the release of *“Breaking Through The Silence: Key Issues and Recommendations to Address HIV/AIDS among Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in the United States.”* The report is available from both [NASTAD's website](#) and [APIAHF's website](#).

This is the first report by both organizations that specifically identifies key issues and recommendations that health departments can undertake to address the growing impact of HIV/AIDS among Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders communities. Recommendations in the report include:

- Strengthening data collection and reporting efforts;
- Increasing health department and community awareness of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities and their HIV prevention needs;
- Considering opportunities to increase prioritization of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities; and
- Increasing the capacity of health departments and community based organizations to address the HIV prevention needs of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities.

“When HIV/AIDS surveillance data is taken in consideration with the significant population growth of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, the need for increased HIV prevention efforts is clearly heightened,” stated Dr. Ho L Tran, APIAHF Chief Executive Officer. “The title of the document, ‘Breaking Through the Silence,’ symbolizes the collective silence among Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders as well as in health departments. We must recognize and address the impact of HIV/AIDS in these communities.”

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NASTAD and APIAHF are committed to continuing their collaboration in working with health departments, community based organizations, and community stakeholders to sustain and increase HIV prevention efforts among Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. These efforts include working with specific health departments to assess and improve their relationships and surveillance activities, developing workshops and trainings, and drafting follow-up reports.

“Each of us has a role in helping to increase awareness about the impact of HIV and AIDS within Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities,” remarked Julie Scofield, NASTAD’s Executive Director. “We must all intensify our efforts to advocate, educate, and ultimately eliminate health disparities that exist within these communities. NASTAD supports the efforts of health departments and national and community partners to raise awareness about, and confront, the growing rates of infection among these populations,” she continued.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders are an emerging risk group for HIV infection.

- As of December 2005, an estimated 7,739 AIDS cases have been diagnosed among these populations since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic.
- CDC has also reported that Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders were the only racial/ethnic group to have statistically significant increases in estimated annual percentage change in HIV diagnosis rates between 2001 and 2004.
- Between 1990 and 2000, the Asian American population grew by as much as 72 percent; the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population grew by as much as 140 percent.

Founded in 1992, NASTAD is a nonprofit national association of state health department HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis program directors who have programmatic responsibility for administering HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis health care, prevention, education, and supportive services programs funded by state and federal governments. NASTAD’s mission is to strengthen state and territory-based leadership, expertise, and advocacy and bring them to bear in reducing the incidence of HIV infection, and in providing care and support to all who live with HIV/AIDS. NASTAD’s vision is a world free of HIV/AIDS. For more information, visit www.NASTAD.org.

Established in 1986, the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) is a national health policy and advocacy organization whose mission is to enable Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders to attain the highest possible level of health and well-being. For more information, visit www.apiahf.org

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