



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**NASTAD Calls for a National Dialogue
About Protecting the Lives of Black Gay Men in the United States**

Washington, D.C. – Black gay men have the highest HIV infection rates in the United States due to a complexity of issues linked to their race, sexual identity and gender. Because they face unequalled disparities, the nation must embark upon a candid, albeit difficult, conversation that names the many cofactors that contribute to this unacceptable risk of HIV infection and burden of disease. In solemn recognition of [National Black HIV/ AIDS Awareness Day \(NBHAAD\)](#), the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) calls on public health and community allies to examine the behavioral, social, political and structural influences that affect the lives of Black gay men and for collective action to strengthen HIV preventions programs for this vulnerable, often marginalized population.

NASTAD is launching several new strategies that will explore issues relevant to Black gay men and other high-risk populations. The strategies include the release of a new podcast series, a new issue brief series, and a weblog:

- NASTAD's 2009 podcast series, *Connecting the Dots*, explores the complexities that shape our understanding of the HIV/ AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and viral hepatitis epidemics in the U.S. The first podcast explores racism, homophobia, gender roles, pop culture and media in the lives of Black gay men. The podcast offers listeners an opportunity to develop new insights and ideas, renew their commitment to asking difficult questions and seek real solutions to the challenges impacting the lives of Black gay men. This podcast will be presented in four parts. Part one can be found on [NASTAD's website](#). The remaining three podcasts will be released over the next several months.
- NASTAD's [Issue Brief on Young Black and Latino Gay Men and Other Men Who Have Sex with Men \(MSM\)](#) launches a three part series examining the importance of youth as essential partners in the nation's fight against HIV/ AIDS, STD and viral hepatitis. The issue brief highlights recent epidemiological data, discusses social determinants of health, provides an analysis of structural-level challenges

impacting policy and programs targeting young people and offers a compendium of strategies for health departments and their partners.

- To encourage discussion about these and other important topics, NASTAD has initiated a new [weblog \(www.nastad.wordpress.com\)](http://www.nastad.wordpress.com). The blog features posts on important topics and invites listeners and readers to share their thoughts, ideas and questions with one another.

These new activities reflect NASTAD's ongoing commitment to addressing the disproportionate burden of HIV/AIDS and other diseases on Black Americans. In 2001, NASTAD published its first monograph, which was updated in 2006. The updated monograph, [*Why We Can't Wait: The Tipping Point for HIV/AIDS among African Americans*](#), calls for a redoubled effort to work with health departments and Black communities to reduce new HIV infections. In November 2005, NASTAD issued a powerful Call to Action, [*A Turning Point: Confronting HIV/AIDS in African American Communities*](#), which encourages a broad, heightened response to the growing epidemic among Black Americans. Together, these documents provided the foundation for many other NASTAD publications, including three issue briefs focusing on Black gay men and one issue brief focusing on Black women. All issue briefs and other relevant documents can be found on [NASTAD's website](#).

Founded in 1992, NASTAD is a nonprofit national association of state health department HIV/AIDS 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. For more information, visit www.NASTAD.org.

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