



## For Immediate Release

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### **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN, INC. & NATIONAL ACTION NETWORK TO HOST COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH SUMMIT FOR BLACK WOMEN**

(For Immediate Release: Washington, D.C.—(August 9, 2011) - Continuing their mutual commitment to the lives of Black women, on September 21, 2011, the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), the National Action Network (NAN), I Choose Life Health and Wellness Center (ICL), and members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) will present *The Women's Health Summit: "Harnessing Our Power: "Mind, Body, and Soul" with a special focus on "HIV/AIDS and African American Women: The Forgotten Population"* during the Annual Legislative Caucus (ALC) in Washington, DC. WHUR 96.3 FM-Washington is the official media sponsor.

The Women's Health Summit will assemble a cohort of experts to discuss the myriad of health concerns and disparities that impact Black women, while also providing insight, valuable information and actions for healthy living.

—There are a plethora of diseases and health issues that continue to disproportionately affect Black women when compared to our counterparts," says Avis Jones-DeWeever, PhD, author, policy analyst, and Executive Director, NCNW. —As organizations that are invested in the lives of Black women, we wanted to band together to encourage a holistic dialogue that's solution-based and helps Black women to lead mentally, physically, and emotionally healthy lives."

Not only are African American women more at risk for heart disease, cancer, stroke, high blood pressure, and diabetes, Black women also have the highest rates of obesity, are mostly likely to die during childbirth and mostly likely to suffer the tragedy of infant mortality. Regarding other areas of concern, African American women are less likely to receive accurate mental health diagnoses than their Caucasian counterparts. Additionally, African-American women experience domestic violence at a rate that's 35% higher than Caucasian women and thus account for a disproportionate number of intimate partner homicides.

AIDS still remains a devastating killer of Black women, yet they continue to be relegated to footnotes in national dialogues. The rates of new HIV infections for Black women is nearly 15 times as high as that of Caucasian women and AIDS diagnosis for African American women is at a rate of 20 times higher. HIV/AIDS-related conditions are now the leading cause of death for African American women aged 25-34 years.

The Women's Health Summit will ~~host~~ a panel focused on overall health to tackle domestic violence/sexual assault, sexual health and reproduction, mental health, infant mortality, and obesity." And in efforts to reduce the continued impact of HIV/AIDS on Black women, the summit will also convene *"HIV/AIDS and African American Women: The Forgotten Population,"* a special focus panel, that will look back on the thirty years of the pandemic. The range of experts who will serve as

summit panelists include: Gail Wyatt, PhD, University of Southern California; Tony Wafford, President & CEO, I Choose Life; Laura Meyers, PhD, President & CEO, Planned Parenthood-Metropolitan; Willie J. Parker, MD, MPH, Former Medical Director, Planned Parenthood-Metropolitan; Jamila Perritt, MD, Present Medical Director, Planned Parenthood-Metropolitan; Debra Fraser-Howze, Senior Vice President of Government and External Affairs, OraSure Technologies, Inc.; Dazon Dixon-Dialo, MPH, SisterLove; Monica Sweeney, MD, New York City Health Department; Cynthia Davis, MPH, Board Member, AIDS Healthcare Foundation, Assistant Professor, Medical Sciences Institute, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science.

Panel moderators will be: WHUR 96.3 FM news reporter Molette Green; Jeff Johnson, award-winning journalist, social activist and political commentator; Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever, Executive Director, NCNW, and Dr. Tricia Bent-Goodley, Chair of the CAPS Sequence, Howard University, School of Social Work.

—We’re coming together to show Black women that despite these devastating facts, they are not alone,” says Tony Wafford, President & CEO, I Choose Life. —As a unified force, we can develop solutions to enhance, preserve and protect the lives of Black women.”

The Women’s Health Summit will take place on Wednesday, September 21 from 5:30 pm – 9:00 pm at the National Headquarters of NCNW, 633 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20004. Spacing is limited; please RSVP at [ncnwprograms@gmail.com](mailto:ncnwprograms@gmail.com).

This summit will be sponsored by the following; Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative (AAALI), AIDS Healthcare Foundation, (AHF), Office of Minority Health, (OMH), Office on Women’s Health (OWH), and Vitas.

### **About NCNW**

The National Council of Negro Women, Inc. (NCNW) is a council of national African American women's organizations and community-based sections. Founded in 1935, the NCNW mission is to lead, develop, and advocate for women of African descent as they support their families and communities. NCNW fulfills this purpose through research, advocacy, and national and community-based services and programs on issues of health, education, and economic empowerment in the United States and Africa. With its 39 national affiliates and more than 240 sections, NCNW is a 501(c) 3 organization with an outreach to nearly four million women.

### **About National Action Network (NAN)**

NAN is one of the leading civil rights organizations with over 40 chapters across the country. NAN works extensively to promote a modern civil rights agenda which includes a standard of decency for all people regardless of race or sex, social justice for all communities, education, non-violence, equality in healthcare and improvement of race relations. National Action Network (NAN) has developed a vital, inclusive and workable cooperative health initiative called "I Choose Life" (ICL). At the heart of "I Choose Life" is the vision that the African American community, given adequate information and assistance, will choose life-as expressed in measurable dignity-affirming, life-preserving and health-enhancing practices, that they can be educated, assisted and encouraged to respond personally and collectively to meet the challenge, cost and consequences of the destructive spread of HIV/AIDS and interrelated health problems. And that they will self-consciously become involved in ongoing and effective efforts to improve, protect, preserve and enhance their lives and health and insure a good future for coming generations.

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