

# World AIDS Day Coalition

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AIDS Coalition to Network Organize and Win

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Project Inform

National Coordinator:  
Eve Faber

## MEMORANDUM

Date: November 3, 1989

To: Executive Directors of AIDS Organizations

From: Terry Beswick, Community Research Alliance; Paul Boneberg, Mobilization Against AIDS; Pat Christen, San Francisco AIDS Foundation; Martin Delaney, Project Inform; Arawn Eiblyn, ACT NOW; Eve Faber, OUT-DC; Gil Gerald, Minority AIDS Project; Dave Johnson; Cleve Jones; Paul Kawata, National Minority AIDS Council; Tim McFeeley, Human Rights Campaign Fund; Mike Maridian, National Association of People With AIDS; David Barr, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund; Tim Sweeney, Gay Men's Health Crisis; Urvashi Vaid, National Gay & Lesbian Task Force; Reggie Williams, National AIDS Education/Prevention Project; Phil Wilson, Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum

Re: Dramatic Action To Expand the Federal Response to AIDS

As you know, last July the total number of Americans diagnosed with AIDS surpassed 100,000. It took eight years to reach this tragic milestone, but astonishingly another 100,000 people will be diagnosed with AIDS in the next fifteen months alone. The impact on AIDS service organizations will be devastating.

AIDS agencies around the country are overwhelmed and stretched beyond their limits to meet the current prevention and healthcare demands presented by the epidemic. Without a greatly expanded funding and action program at the federal level, AIDS services organizations face disaster. We can tell you candidly as executive directors of groups fighting AIDS that unless a significant change is made in federal appropriations, we fear for the survival of our organizations and the individuals who depend on our services.

In response to this impending crisis, AIDS service and activist organizations are forming a united, culturally diverse alliance to plan a dramatic CALL FOR ACTION on World AIDS Day, December 1st in Washington, D.C. The action will involve staging a well-organized and highly publicized act of civil disobedience in front of the White House. The action will also include a quarter page ad in the Washington Post appealing directly to President Bush for more immediate action on AIDS.

The plan is to orchestrate a mass sit-down and arrest on Pennsylvania Avenue. It is absolutely crucial to the success of this event that executive directors from as many AIDS service organizations as possible participate and share the lead position in this act of civil disobedience. In other words, the ideal day after news headline would read: **Leaders of Major AIDS Groups Arrested In World AIDS Day Demonstration.**

The full message we want to send to President Bush, Congress and the American People is that the AIDS leadership of the country is absolutely desperate for increased federal support. As the epidemic moves into its second decade, the following actions must be taken at the federal level:

- RECOGNITION that health care should be the right of all Americans and therefore no citizen should be allowed to become ill or die because of their financial status;
- ACCESS to necessary treatments and early interventions now for all people with the HIV infection regardless of sex, sexual orientation, race or economic status;
- COMMITMENT to the establishment of a full continuum of care that addresses primary and acute health care, housing, mental health, and social service needs of people with AIDS and HIV infection;
- DEDICATION of resources and sound public policy to an expanded, targeted and more aggressive prevention effort unimpeded by the moralism of the past;
- LEADERSHIP from President Bush, and the Congress to assure that the second decade of this epidemic has an aggressive, effective and fully funded plan of action;

We recognize that asking individuals to participate in an arrest action is a serious and extraordinary request. Individuals may have to assume clear risks relating to safety and legal liability. These risks are not to be taken lightly. In planning this action, organizers are taking all necessary steps to ensure that those individuals who are arrested have access to adequate legal resources and are released from jail quickly.

Over the course of the epidemic, thousands of AIDS activists have subjected themselves to arrest to save lives and to force a rational government response to the AIDS epidemic. As executive directors of AIDS organizations, we believe that the need for this type of powerful action is more necessary today than ever before.

The full participation of leaders from AIDS service organizations, particularly those groups that reach people of color, women and children, will greatly amplify the message that the federal response to the AIDS epidemic continues to fail the nation -- a failure that can no longer be tolerated. We urge you to gather with executive directors from AIDS organizations across the country on World AIDS Day in Washington, D.C. to help bring this message to the President, Congress and the American Public.

To confirm your participation and to receive more information on the CALL FOR ACTION, contact Eve Faber, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (202) 332-6483.

Thank You