First Listening Session Held at USCA to Inform Updates to National HIV/AIDS Strategy and National Viral Hepatitis Action Plans

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Cross-posted from the HIV.gov blog

One of the highlights of the 2018 U.S. Conference on AIDS (USCA) for us was the opportunity to hear from community members about their ideas on priorities and issues to be addressed as we begin work to update the National HIV/AIDS Strategy - PDF NHAS) [PDF, 2.2MB] and National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan (NVHAP) both of which are set to expire in 2020.

Joined by colleagues from the HHS Office of HIV/AIDS and Infectious Disease Policy, we convened the first listening session on Friday, September 7, at the conference. We heard from community leaders, frontline workers, individuals living with and at risk for infection, and other members of the community from across the nation during this session.

Among the many comments offered during the session, we heard about:

- The importance of addressing housing, incarceration, and other social determinants of health
- The need to be strategic in the scale up PrEP
- Concerns that issues of aging and HIV be addressed
- Concerns that adequate funding be provided to enact the strategies contained in both updated plans
- The importance of focusing on HIV and hepatitis disparities if we are to end the epidemics
- Expectations that funding and support for programs currently in place will be continued, particularly the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program
- A desire for new forms of accountability for progress, perhaps in the form of state plans or

report cards

- The need for attention to developing and sustaining a skilled healthcare workforce
- The need to ensure that substance abuse prevention, treatment, and the infectious disease consequences of the nation's opioid epidemic are a focus of the updated plans
- Encouragement for more ambitious targets
- A desire for even stronger coordination on the federal level, particularly around viral hepatitis issues
- The importance of doing more than just talking about combating stigma associated with HIV, HBV, and HCV
- The importance of healthcare access and access to health coverage for people living with and at risk for HIV, HBV, and HCV
- And much more

We look forward to additional stakeholder input as the update process unfolds. Such community input again will be integral to the development of both plans, as it was in the development of the current and prior versions of both plans. Everyone has a role to play in our national fights against HIV and viral hepatitis. Active engagement by and of a broad mix of stakeholders from various sectors, both public and private, in communities and states across the nation have been great strengths in making the NHAS and the NVHAP both national plans, not merely federal plans.

As Kaye Hayes, Deputy Director of OHAIDP observed in her final Facebook Live conversation from USCA, additional opportunities for stakeholder and community input on the updates to both plans will be announced in the coming months. Follow HIV.gov and the HHS hepatitis blog for details.

Community leaders and other members of the community provided feedback to inform updates to the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and National Viral Hepatitis Action Plans. #2018USCA Learn more: https://go.usa.gov/xPrKB

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