



**For Immediate Release: January 30, 2015**

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**Long Island Association for AIDS Care celebrates National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day**

**February 7, 2015** marks the fifteenth annual observance of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD). The focus of NBHAAD is to get African Americans across the country educated about the basics of HIV and AIDS in their local communities and to encourage everyone to get tested. During last year's National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, New York State Health Commissioner Nirav R. Shah M.D., M.P.H. stated that "great progress has been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS, but we must remain vigilant in promoting healthy behaviors, HIV testing, and greater awareness of the disease."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, African Americans have the most severe burden of HIV of all racial/ethnic groups in the United States. Compared with other races and ethnicities, African Americans account for a higher proportion of new HIV infections, those living with HIV, and those ever diagnosed with AIDS. The New York State HIV/AIDS Surveillance Annual Report for 2014 shows that health disparities related to race continue to exist in New York State. The rates of new HIV diagnoses among Blacks are 7.4 times higher than the rate for Whites, with the prevalence rate being 8.2 times higher. These higher numbers can be linked to prevention challenges which include: the lack of awareness of HIV status, socioeconomic issues associated with poverty and negative perceptions about HIV testing.

In recognition of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, the Long Island Association for AIDS Care will launch a week-long HIV/AIDS education and testing initiative. On February 7, LIAAC will be providing testing and tabling services at the Elmont, Amityville, and Hempstead Walgreens locations. Check LIAAC's official Facebook events page for more details. For more information on National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and for a comprehensive list of testing locations, visit our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/LIAAC.inc>, our website at [www.liaac.org](http://www.liaac.org) or call our toll free hotline at 1-877-TO-LIAAC.

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