

HCCI ADDRESSES HIV/AIDS IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITH KICK-OFF BREAKFAST FOR THE 16TH ANNUAL BLACK CHURCH WEEK OF PRAYER FOR THE HEALING OF AIDS

Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement (HCCI) will open the 16th Annual Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS (BCHWA) with the 6th Annual Kick-Off Breakfast on Friday, March 4th. The week-long event will close with a 8-hour Prayer and Gospel Vigil on Friday, March 11th. HCCI joins thousands of churches across the nation observing the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS in an effort to stop the transmission of HIV/AIDS and provide compassion for people affected by the disease.

According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, the rate of infection among African Americans has exploded over the past decade. AIDS is the fourth-leading cause of death among women in this country between the ages of 25 and 44, and is the leading cause of death among African American women ages 25 to 34. HIV infection has been designated

the fifth largest leading cause of death for people 25-44 years old in the United States, and the leading cause of death for African-American men ages 35-44. As a Certified Partner of the Balm in Gilead, HCCI works with the other 300 congregations in Harlem to promote the importance of the Black Church Week of Prayer and provide technical assistance that shows congregations how they can become involved and effectively address the issue.

The 6th Annual Kick-Off Breakfast will take place on Friday, March 4th from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at St. Charles Borromeo Church, 211 West 141st Street, between 7th and 8th Avenue. The Keynote Speaker is Rev. Edwin C. Sanders, II from Metropolitan Interdenominational Church in Nashville, Tennessee. Admission \$20.00.

"A Healing in Harlem" - A 8-hour marathon of praise and worship will take place on Friday, March 11th from 4:00 PM to 12:00



AM at Salvation & Deliverance Church, 37 West 116th Street, between 5th and Lenox Avenue. This event hosted by Dr. Bobby Jones of BET will feature over 16 choirs from the tri-state area and admission is free.

HCCI, located in Harlem, New York, was formed in 1986 as a diverse inter-faith consortium of more than 90 congregations. It is a large multi-service organization, with five major divisions, one of which is the Department of Health and Wellness Strategies. The Health & Wellness Strategies Division (HWS) provides educational and technical assistance to the

community about the diseases and issues that affect the community. These services include the provision of supportive housing to 60 HIV infected families; addressing the lack of understanding and information about HIV among people from religious communities; providing diabetes and immunization education; providing access to food card access through facilitated enrollment; and housing a WIC Program Site.

For more information about these events, contact 212-491-1119.