

PRESIDENTIAL

ADVISORY August 19, 1998

COUNCIL ON
HIV/AIDS The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (Council), we urge you to address three very important health-related requests. The first is a call for a “National State of Emergency in AIDS and Public Health”; the second is a meeting with the Black and Hispanic Congressional Caucuses; and finally a meeting with key community leaders to address HIV/AIDS in racial ethnic populations.

During our June Council meeting, we unanimously voted to support the call by the Congressional Black Caucus for the declaration of a “National State of Emergency in AIDS and Public Health” in communities of African descent. Given the impact of HIV and AIDS in all communities of color, we have expanded our call to include all racial and ethnic populations. When compounded with the long term existing health problems of these communities, fueled by epidemic proportions of substance abuse, sexually transmitted disease and other chronic and fatal health conditions, we urge you to support this declaration of a “state of emergency” as allowed under current federal law to address a disease that is devastating entire communities.

As part of this call, we request that you convene a meeting with the Black and Hispanic Congressional Caucuses to discuss the “state of emergency,” and host a White House meeting with key leaders from communities of color to specifically address HIV/AIDS in these communities.

Your goal to “reduce new infections until there are none by the year 2000,” is laudable. However, we believe it can only be accomplished through serious, new measures being taken within Black and Latino communities which have been plunged into a public health crisis fueled by HIV/AIDS. We must go beyond the traditional legislative remedies and move forward with you mission to end racial and ethnic disparities in health. Your leadership in bringing nationally recognized coalitions together to specifically address this issue is needed.

Sincerely,

(Originally signed by RHS on 8/19/98)

R. Scott Hitt, MD
Chair

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cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Richard Gephardt