

AIDS ACTION BALTIMORE, INC.

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Dear Friends:

AIDS Action Baltimore (AAB) has been providing essential services to people with HIV/AIDS since 1987. And thanks to your generosity, we're still standing after the horrible financial meltdown. We know only too well that times are tough, but as we approach our 24th year of service, we hope we can count on your continued support so that we can maintain our many HIV/AIDS programs. We still desperately need your help to keep our doors open and continue to provide our many essential services to the Baltimore HIV/AIDS community. We hope you will remember us and **continue your loyal support.** Please help us in any way you can. Your donations will enable us to continue our marvelous record of benevolence and compassion with **only a rate of 6.80% overhead in 2009** with a staff of only two full-time employees. **The amount of work we have accomplished and the effect we have had on the war against AIDS with only two full-time employees is truly amazing!**

Although HIV disease is becoming a manageable disease, here is why we still need your help now more than ever:

In 2008, Baltimore-Towson ranked fourth among metropolitan areas for new reports of AIDS cases. Maryland ranked second among states and territories in AIDS cases, reporting 27.6 cases per 100,000 population in 2008. Statistics from 2006 indicate that **1 out of every 161 people in Maryland and 1 out of every 41 people in Baltimore City were living with HIV/AIDS. Six new cases are diagnosed in Maryland every day. That means one person was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS every four hours in Maryland and every eight hours in Baltimore. AAB has been instrumental in organizing the community in the effort to streamline HIV testing laws and regulations so that more people can be tested for HIV. Because of AAB's leadership in this arena, it is now much easier for people who want to be tested to do so without a lot of red tape. This will help thwart the needless spreading of HIV. Once people know they are HIV positive, they are eight times less likely to practice risky behavior. People also need to know they are HIV positive so that they can take advantage of all the new treatments we are helping to make available. Like all diseases, the sooner you can treat HIV, the better your chances of survival. AAB continues to work with the state to ensure that the new HIV testing regulations are practical and to ensure that HIV testing is routinely offered to people in our metropolitan area.**

AAB continues to provide financial assistance to many needy people with HIV/AIDS. AAB has provided this support to over two hundred people over the past year alone. Since 1987, AAB has provided over \$2,421,000 in assistance to needy people with HIV/AIDS and their families in our community for items such as rent and utilities. We firmly believe we must continue our invaluable financial assistance programs. Our programs provide a safety net to people with HIV/AIDS experiencing an emergency financial crisis.

Federal money has also been steadily decreasing while the rate of HIV cases in Baltimore is still raging. Because federal dollars are shrinking, we need your help more than ever so that we can continue the fight to save our community from the devastation of HIV disease. AAB is also working with other national advocates to ensure that the new healthcare legislation regulations will provide as much care and support for people with HIV as the model HIV programs developed under the Ryan White Care Act and to ensure that all classes of antiviral HIV drugs are included on new federal drug formularies. It gets more complicated every year.

Our work affects all who are touched by HIV/AIDS since sooner or later all people with this HIV/AIDS will need new drugs to add to their drug cocktails because the old drugs are no longer working or because they are causing life-threatening side effects. Resistance to drug therapies is a constant problem in the fight against AIDS. We are working with all HIV drug companies to ensure that their new drug pipelines remain robust. AAB continues to work with companies on Community Advisory Boards to uncover the best way to use exciting new HIV drugs. We continue to work with drug companies to change the standard of care by replacing more toxic drugs used in current cocktails with more effective and better tolerated drugs.

AAB is committed to continuing our commitment to national research advocacy for safer new drugs and services. AAB has been instrumental in the formation of the Drug Development Committee of the AIDS Treatment Activists Coalition, a national organization that interacts with the pharmaceutical industry, pressuring companies to study drugs expeditiously and ethically and to include the HIV affected community in all aspects of research and development. AAB is also working with national coalitions like the Federal AIDS Policy Partnership and Hepatitis C Activists United, as well as the newly formed Maryland Hepatitis Coalition to obtain new money and services for people with Hepatitis C (HCV) and people coinfecting with HIV and HCV. HCV is a huge problem in the Baltimore metropolitan area. For example, as many as 75% of people treated for HIV at the Johns Hopkins Hospital at any given time may also be coinfecting with HCV as well as HIV.

AAB also works with the national Fair Pricing Coalition (FPC) to pressure “big pharma” into pricing AIDS drugs reasonably after FDA approval, to cap ongoing drug prices for government AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs) and to initiate co-pay programs for patients with private insurance. At this juncture, every major HIV drug company has agreed to a co-pay program that will reimburse people with private insurance for their co-pay costs. Our work directly affects the people of Maryland who have ever increasing co-pays as a condition of their insurance coverage. We are also working very hard to ensure that the over 4,000 people across the country who are on ADAP waiting lists get their drugs free from “big pharma” through a streamlined national Patient Assistance Program. Our work is way ahead of the curve. This type of advocacy does not happen in any other disease advocacy community.

AAB continues to host RISE, (Rewriting Inner Scripts), a new quarterly retreat for men who love men. This is a one and a half day facilitated discussion retreat, promoting self-learning in a positive, affirming peer group environment. RISE creates a safe and comfortable space for men who love men to explore and overcome the effects of sexism, homophobia and past negative messaging in their lives. RISE is about reclaiming your personal power to love and to build self-esteem as well as to live free from oppression. Improved self esteem will help to foster health and well being among community members and may help to prevent HIV transmission.

We are also **trying to help ourselves**. Thanks to the many of you who attended our fall events. The **Bowling for Life, DK Salon Hair-a-Thon** and **Tryconnell** events were all very successful. We're looking forward to some **great new events next year** too. For more information on events and the latest in HIV/treatment and research information, **please check out our web site at www.aidsactionbaltimore.org.**

Please help us to continue our emergency financial assistance programs and our vital local and national advocacy. We greatly appreciate your continued support in these tough economic times. Thank you in advance for your contribution and for your past generosity. We know you are called on to make many charitable donations. We very much appreciate your continued confidence in our work. Your donation will help us to save lives. We are forever grateful for your trust and loyal support. Remember, now more than ever, without people like you, there would be no AIDS Action Baltimore!

Sincerely,



Lynda Dee & the AAB Board
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CONTRIBUTION ENCLOSED: \$50 \$75 \$100 \$500 OTHER