

# **AIDS ACTION BALTIMORE, INC.**

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May, 2014

Dear Friends:

**AIDS Action Baltimore (AAB) has been providing essential services to people with HIV/AIDS since 1987. Thanks to your generosity, we're still standing after a long hard financial battle. We know only too well that times are still tough, but as we commemorate our 27<sup>th</sup> year of service, we hope we can count on your continued support which will help us 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 4.6% overhead in 2013. The amount of work we accomplish and the effect we have had on the war against HIV and HCV with only two full-time and two part-time employees is truly amazing!**

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

**In the latest Centers for Disease Control data reported through June of 2012, Maryland ranked third highest in the rate of new HIV infections in US states and territories and fourth highest in the number of people living with HIV. The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene estimates that there are currently 6,250 Marylanders who are unaware that they are HIV positive.**

**AAB was 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 much 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. The most recent HIV clinical trials data tells us that the sooner you treat HIV, the better your chances of continued good health and survival.**

**AAB continues to provide financial assistance to many needy people with HIV/AIDS. AAB has provided this support to over 7,100 people since 1987 and over \$2,718,000 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 which provide a safety net to people with HIV/AIDS experiencing an emergency financial crisis.**

**Federal money is 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 has worked with Senator Barbara Mikulski this year to ensure the federal budget provided increases to NIH research funding and continued funding for the Ryan White Care Act for the care and support of people with HIV. We also worked with national advocates to ensure that all classes of antiviral HIV drugs are included on new Obama Care Act drug formularies. HIV policy gets more complicated all the time, and it is much harder every year for us to obtain the money we need to fight the epidemic.**

**Our work affects all who are touched by HIV/AIDS. Eventually all people with HIV/AIDS will need new drug cocktails when their old drugs are no longer working or because they are causing life-threatening side effects. AAB continues to work on government and industry Community Advisory Boards. We are working with industry to continually change the standard of care by ensuring that their new drug pipelines remain robust, and by replacing more older toxic drugs with more effective and better tolerated drugs. We are very excited that scientists have begun to work on HIV "CURE" research. AAB is working with government and industry and the national HIV community to make a "CURE" for HIV a reality. Even though this will take years to come to fruition, we have to start somewhere. AAB is a member of the new Martin Delaney Cure Research Collaboratories National Community Advisory Board and is committed to national research advocacy for better, safer new drugs and even an eventual "CURE" for HIV although this will be a long hard road.**

**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 the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable, as well as the Maryland Hepatitis Coalition to obtain new money and services for people with HIV and Hepatitis C Virus (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 Johns Hopkins Hospital and the University of Maryland at any given time may be coinfecting with HCV as well as HIV.**

AAB is a leading member of the national Fair Pricing Coalition, pressuring “big pharma” to price HIV and HCV drugs reasonably, limit price increases, cap ongoing drug prices for government programs like AIDS Drug Assistance Programs and to initiate co-pay programs for patients with private insurance. At this juncture, we have convinced every major HIV and HCV drug company to create co-pay programs that will cover co-pay costs for people with private insurance. We are now working to ensure that all companies also cover the other high out of pocket prescription related costs like deductibles and co-insurance. Our work directly affects Marylanders with ever increasing out of pocket prescription costs. We are also working very hard to ensure that people across the country who cannot afford their medications get their drugs for free from “big pharma” through Patient Assistance Programs (PAPs). We were very successful in working in conjunction with the National Alliance of States and Territorial AIDS Directors and the federal government to develop one uniform application for the various drug companies so that people need only complete one form instead of four or five different PAP applications when applying for help free drug cocktails as well as uniform eligibility criteria through an open and transparent process. We are now working on a one stop shopping location so that patients can apply once for all their different HIV drugs instead of having to apply to each drug company. Our work is way ahead of the curve. This type of advocacy does not happen in any other disease community.

AAB’s Project TEA Time, an HIV prevention program for transgender people that promotes HIV testing and helps people get linked to care and treatment and remain in treatment is alive and well. AAB also continues to conduct community forums to educate people about new HIV and HCV drugs and cutting edge research issues.

We are still doing our best to help ourselves. Thanks to the many of you who attended our recent Tea at Brookside at the home of Angie and Blake Cordish which raised over \$72,000. We’re looking forward to our next Brookside event in September of 2014 which will be bigger and even better. For more information on our events and the latest in HIV and HCV treatment and research information as well as drug co-pay and financial assistance access information, check out our web site at [www.aidsactionbaltimore.org](http://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  
Merle McCann, M.D., Chair

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CONTRIBUTION ENCLOSED:       \$50          \$75         \$100        \$500        OTHER  

Our current financial statement is available upon request by contacting AIDS Action Baltimore at 10 East Eager Street, Baltimore, MD 21202 or (410)837-2437. Documents and information submitted to the State of Maryland under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act are available from the Office of the Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401 for the cost of copying and postage.