

# **AIDS ACTION BALTIMORE, INC.**

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November 2022

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. We all know only too well that times are still tough, but as we commemorate our 35th 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 4.3% overhead in 2021. The amount of work we accomplish and the effect we have had on the war against HIV with only four 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:

AAB still provides financial assistance to many needy people with HIV/AIDS. AAB has provided this support to over 8,800 people since 1987 and \$3,186,000 in assistance for items such as rent and utilities, and direct programs in our community to people with HIV/AIDS and their families. We firmly believe we must continue our invaluable financial assistance program which provides a safety net to people with HIV/AIDS experiencing an emergency financial crisis.

In the latest Centers for Disease Control (CDC) data reported in 2021, Maryland was ranked 12th among U.S. states and territories in adult/adolescent HIV diagnosis rates (per 100,000) in 2020. At the end of 2021, there were 32,149 people aged 13 and older living with diagnosed HIV in Maryland. An estimated 3,400 people with HIV (PWHIV) in Maryland in 2020 remain undiagnosed.

AAB has been instrumental again this year in reducing HIV transmission in Baltimore. According to the CDC, the lifetime risk of HIV is one in 22 for Black males, one in 51 for Latinx males, and one in 140 for White males. We are currently administering an HIV PrEP prevention program, known as New Horizons. PrEP is a one pill, once a day pill that has proven to be 99% effective in reducing HIV transmission risk. Our HIV prevention program provides outreach, education, testing assistance, healthcare linkages, navigation support and support groups that promote medication adherence for African-American Transgender (Trans) people and Gay men at risk of HIV, and also for people who are HIV positive. We also provide our clients with the latest in HIV prevention and treatment research information.

New Horizons promotes a continuum of care HIV prevention and/or HIV treatment including retention in care and adherence to life-saving medications in Gay men and Trans people as well. Our prevention and treatment efforts have been extremely successful. We seek to educate Black Gay men and Trans people about their exorbitant risk of HIV transmission, and help them build networks of support to combat the many social obstacles they encounter daily which contribute to their risk of HIV, causing them to fall in and out of care and treatment. We have also been educating people about Treatment as Prevention (TASP), also known as U=U (Undetectable HIV = Untransmittable HIV). If a person's HIV viral load is undetectable, they cannot transmit HIV to another person! We are very proud of our very successful support and education programs which have helped to decrease HIV as well as the number of PWHIV we have helped to access and remain on life-saving HIV medications. AAB can continue to provide these life-saving programs with your help.

**Our national work affects all who are touched by HIV/AIDS. We are working with industry to continually change the standard of care by ensuring that their new drug pipelines remain robust, and by replacing older more toxic drugs with more effective, better tolerated drugs, as well as exciting new long-acting drugs for HIV prevention and treatment that may require only daily, weekly or monthly dosing. This is the wave of the future.**

**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 has also been a leading member of the national Fair Pricing Coalition (FPC), pressuring “big pharma” to price HIV 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. We convinced every HIV and Hepatitis C drug company to create programs that will cover outrageously expensive co-pays and other out of pocket (OOP) costs for people with private insurance. Our work directly affects Marylanders with ever increasing OOP prescription costs. We are also working very hard to ensure that people in Maryland and across the country who cannot afford their medications get their drugs for free from “big pharma” through Patient Assistance Programs (PAPs). These OOP co-pay programs are being discontinued by insurance providers. AAB has been trying to work in collaboration with numerous national organizations to preserve co-pay programs which have recently come under attack by healthcare insurance companies. We are also currently leading a coalition of local service providers to make sure the Maryland AIDS Drug Assistance Program begins to function properly after the hack of Maryland Department of Health’s computers. With the help of this coalition and your continued support, we will be able to ensure that PWHIV receive their HIV medications without further interruptions.**

**We are very excited that scientists have begun to work on HIV “cure- related” research. AAB is working with government, industry and the national HIV community nationally to make a “cure” for HIV or what we are now calling “durable HIV suppression” a reality. Even though this will take years to come to fruition, we have to start somewhere. AAB is a member of the DARE Martin Delaney Cure Research Collaboratories. AAB is also working with DARE researchers to bring additional resources to Baltimore for local cure research projects. We conducted four HIV Cure Forums in 2019 to 2022.**

**HIV policy gets more complicated every year. COVID-19 is still eating a large percentage of US Health and Human Services (HHS) funding. We are in danger of losing all our hard-won treatment and prevention gains. Because of COVID-19, it is much harder to obtain the money we need to fight HIV. We are working very closely with the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) in their End the HIV Epidemic Initiative. The BCHD has also provided funding for our prevention and treatment programs. We had nine Town Halls in conjunction with the BCHD from 2020 to 2022, discussing new HIV and COVID-19 news. Innovative events like this would not happen without AIDS Action Baltimore.**

**AAB successfully advocated for increased NIH HIV research funding, and will continue to advocate for other HHS budget increases, like continued funding for the Ryan White Care Act for the support of people with HIV. We continue to advocate for COVID-19 support for people with HIV. We are using our many years of government research and policy expertise and connections in the fight against COVID-19. AAB was instrumental in ensuring that PWHIV were not excluded from COVID-19 vaccine protocols, and worked tirelessly to ensure that PWHIV were finally prioritized for COVID-19 vaccinations both nationally and in Maryland. We spearheaded many months of high-level advocacy, collaborating with national activists to ensure that PWHIV were included in COVID-19 vaccine trials and prioritized for vaccines.**

**We know that many of you have suffered too during the COVID-19 crisis. AAB helped to fund local COVID-19 food insecurity efforts for people with HIV, and expanded our financial assistance programs for PWHIV who have COVID-19 emergencies. During the initial shut-down, we sent needy clients COVID-19 care packages that included masks, hand sanitizer and important COVID-19 information. Please be sure to contact us if you think any of our many programs might be of assistance to you or your friends and family.**

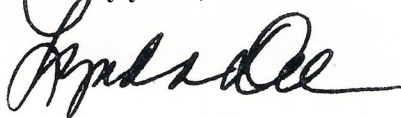
**We have been fierce advocates of expanded vaccines and treatment for monkeypox for our community at both the federal and state levels. AAB has also conducted a Town Hall in collaboration with the Maryland**

Department of Health, Johns Hopkins and the Pride Center of Maryland in an effort to inform people of the risk of monkeypox as well as how and where to access vaccines and treatment. Advocating for life-saving vaccines and treatments has been our life's work. Our expertise and long-standing contacts in these arenas are invaluable. Our work is way ahead of the curve. The type of advocacy done by AAB does not happen in any other disease community.

Our city and country need the expertise of AIDS activists now more than ever. As always, we will continue to work locally and nationally for PWHIV as well as COVID-19 and monkeypox issues. With your help, we can continue to keep our doors open to face these other infectious diseases that affect our community. But we cannot do it without your help. Please contribute as much as you can to help us keep our doors open at this critical time in our history.

We are still doing our best to help ourselves. AAB raised \$40,000 at our lovely 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration event at the Belvedere on September 18, 2022. AAB honored John Waters and Pat Moran, Carla Alexander, MD and Richard Chaisson, MD and Debbie Rock and Carlton Smith at our 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event.

Please help us to continue our life-saving programs and our vital local and national research and treatment 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 contributions. 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! We hope you and yours remain safe and well.

Sincerely yours,  


Lynda Dee & the AAB Board  
Merle McCann, M.D., Chair

Michael Aquino  
Jake Boone, III  
Kenny Eggerl

Thomas Holden  
Mark McMullen  
Cameron Wolf, Ph.D., M.P.H.

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

Current financial statement is available upon request. Contacting AIDS Action Baltimore at 14 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.