



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
COMMISSION ON HIV



# The Black Caucus Journey in Addressing HIV and Sexual Health Disparities in LA County"

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Co-Chairs (Current & Former), COH Black Caucus

December 6, 2024

"Our Voices, Our Strength: Elevating Black Lives" in  
Commemoration of World AIDS Day

# WHO WE ARE

The Black Caucus is a collaborative community initiative comprised of passionate Commission and community members focused on addressing sexual health and HIV disparities affecting Black communities in Los Angeles County.

Established after a pivotal National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day panel on February 14, 2019, the Caucus emerged from the Commission on HIV's (COH) directive to tackle the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on Black communities.

Formerly known as the Black/African American Community Task Force (BAAC), the Caucus has since been dedicated to developing inclusive action plans, advocating for change, and advancing equality in healthcare through community-wide mobilization.

# WHY WE ACT

**Disproportionate Impact:** Black people represent 21.3% of new HIV diagnoses in LA County, despite only comprising 8% of the population.

**National Crisis:** Black Americans make up 42% of new HIV diagnoses nationally, though they represent just 14% of the population.

**Local Urgency:** Nearly 1,500 new HIV diagnoses in Los Angeles in the past year highlight an urgent need for culturally responsive healthcare solutions.

**Health Equity:** We believe everyone deserves equitable access to healthcare, and addressing these disparities is key to empowering our community and ending HIV once and for all.

# WHAT WE DO

**Advocate for Policy Change:** Push for policies that support health equity and ensure better health outcomes for Black communities.

**Collaborate with Partners:** Work with local organizations, community groups, and public health agencies to align efforts in addressing sexual health disparities.

**Empower Black-Led Organizations:** Support and strengthen Black-led agencies through capacity building and technical assistance to enhance their impact.

**Promote Sexual Health Education:** Create and share culturally relevant educational materials to raise awareness and dispel myths about sexual health and HIV prevention.

**Mobilize the Community:** Participate in local events like Taste of Soul to engage, educate, and connect with our community members on health topics that matter most to them.

# our journey

Since its inception, the COH Black Caucus has been at the forefront of community-driven efforts to address sexual health disparities within the Black/African American community. We have remained steadfast in our commitment to empowering community voices, advocating for equitable healthcare, and dismantling the stigma surrounding sexual health and HIV. Through these efforts, we continue to build a stronger, more inclusive community that prioritizes sexual health, wellness, and justice for all.



# recommendations

Developed comprehensive recommendations for the COH and DHSP to address the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS and STIs in the Black/African American community through a community-wide mobilization effort. Core recommendations include:

- **Cultural Competency:** Mandate cultural sensitivity training for healthcare providers, focusing on implicit bias, stigma, and medical mistrust.
- **Inclusive Messaging:** Develop marketing strategies for HIV prevention that reduce stigma and resonate with all subpopulations.
- **Community Support:** Increase funding for programs targeting women and families, transgender individuals, and MSMs, with an emphasis on cultural competency and holistic care.
- **Holistic Services:** Advocate for integrated care models addressing mental, physical, and sexual health to improve access and service quality.
- **Targeted Prevention:** Create tailored prevention campaigns, including PrEP and biomedical interventions, to reach key subpopulations.

*Full recommendations available on the COH website at  
<https://hiv.lacounty.gov/our-work/>*

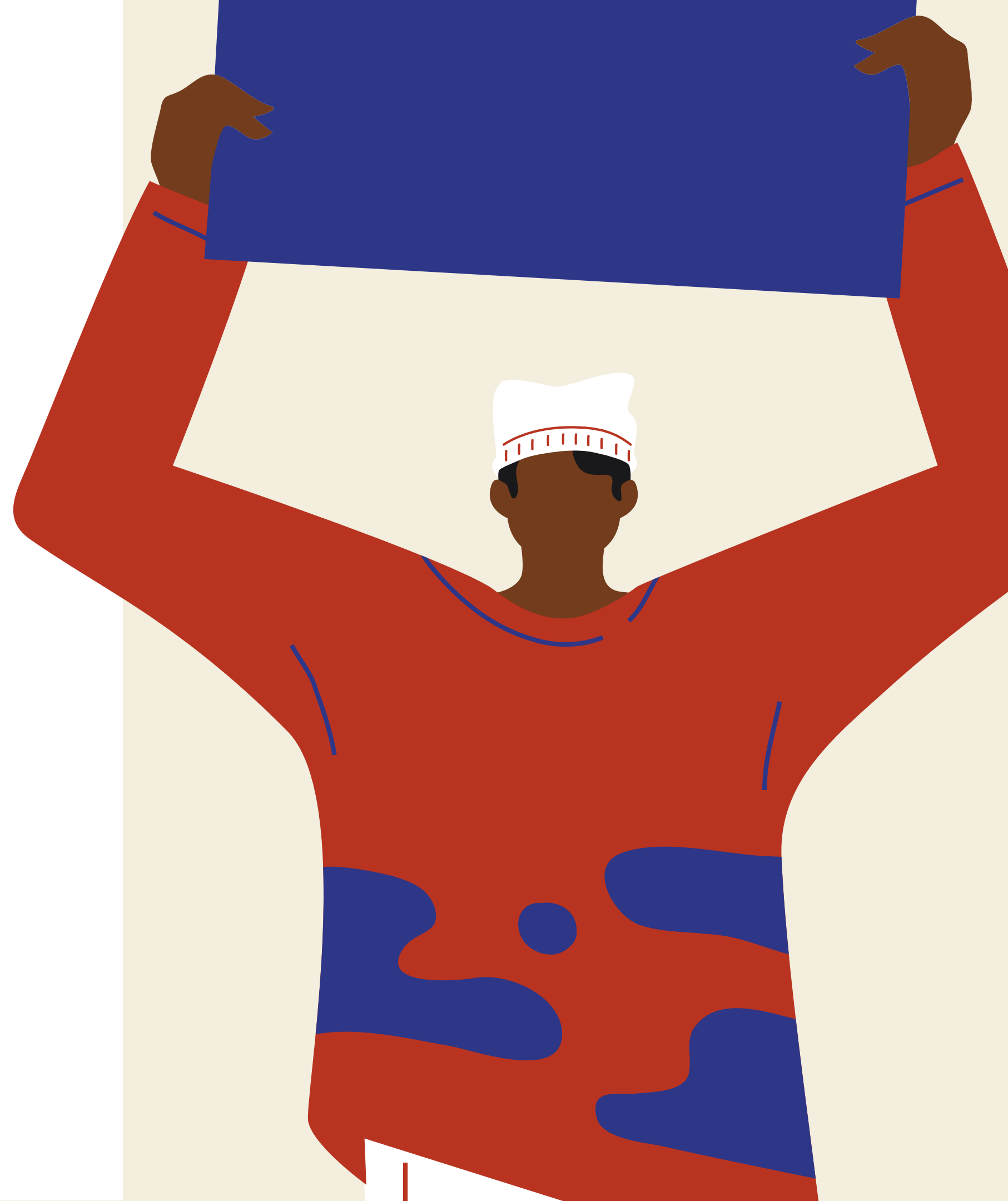
# mandatory cultural sensitivity training

In partnership with DHSP, developed and implemented a mandatory training module for all DHSP-contracted agencies, focusing on cultural sensitivity, implicit bias, stigma, and medical mistrust which are key drivers of health disparities among Black communities.



# PrEP campaign for our black communities

In partnership with DHSP, provided key feedback on a new Black/African-American social media campaign to promote PrEP resources in Los Angeles County.






# organizational needs assessment

In partnership with DHSP, launched an assessment to identify needs and gaps among Black-led and Black-serving organizations in Los Angeles County.

Designed to understand where support is most needed to enhance the capacity of organizations that serve our community. The insights gained will be used to create technical assistance programs that ensure Black-led organizations thrive and effectively address community needs.

# advocacy

The Caucus issued bold and unapologetic statements of solidarity & unity in response to the murder of George Floyd (2020) and the 2024 presidential elections.

  
**Statement of Unity from the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV Black Caucus**  
November 7, 2024

As our communities navigate the current political climate following recent elections, we acknowledge both the progress and the persistent challenges that we continue to face. We stand in unity with each of you, holding our heads high as we work tirelessly to address the historical injustices that have long impacted our communities, leading to disproportionate health outcomes.

Now, more than ever, the Black Caucus is emboldened to advocate fiercely and unapologetically. Together, we will persist, ensuring that our voices, our experiences, and our strength are at the forefront of creating equitable health systems and a brighter future.

In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." May we let love and resilience be our guide.

*If you are interested in joining us in developing a progressive and inclusive agenda to address the disproportionate impact of HIV/STIs in our Black communities of Los Angeles County, please contact us at [hivcomm@lacounty.gov](mailto:hivcomm@lacounty.gov). To view the Caucus recommendations, click [here](#).*

**together.**  
WE CAN END HIV IN OUR COMMUNITIES TOGETHER & FOR ALL.  
Apply to become a Commissioner or Staff  
<https://www.lacounty.gov/2024/05/01/hiv-commissioner>  
For application address, call (310) 799-3033 or email [hivcomm@lacounty.gov](mailto:hivcomm@lacounty.gov)

  
**TO END HIV, WE MUST END RACISM**

On the behalf of the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV, the Black/African American Community (BAAC) Task Force recognizes that there are extremely difficult, disturbing and painful times for us and our communities. We remain steadfast in solidarity with our Black/African American communities and vehemently condemn the pervasive, systemic racism that continues to plague our communities. "Without reckoning with our history of racial injustice and violence we will continue to be haunted by its ugly and painful legacy." (Equal Justice Initiative [EJI])

Racism is a public health emergency and impacts us all. Racism impacts access to and the quality of health care and it dictates when, how and by whom health care is given or withheld. Medical racism by our Black/African American communities and implicit biases of the health care system are rooted in historical, institutional and societal racism. It is without question we cannot end the HIV epidemic without dismantling these systems that continue to perpetuate the injustices that result in disproportionately poorer outcomes in our Black/African American communities. Our HIV community must remain diligent and committed to actively engaging in policy and action that promote health equity, eliminate barriers and address social determinants of health such as: implicit bias; access to care; educational social stigma, i.e. homophobia, transphobia and misogyny; housing; mental health; substance abuse; and income/wealth gaps.

As HIV advocates, we cannot sit idly by and allow these inequities to continue. We must act now by centering ALL of our work and conversations around the intersection of racism and the unequal burden of HIV on our Black/African American communities. The Commission is committed to taking action.

We stand in remembrance of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony Mc Dade, Ahmaud Arbery, and all those who have lost their lives to senseless acts of violence, police brutality and HIV/AIDS. We stand with you, we hurt with you, and we will take action to address these inequities and heal with you.

In Solidarity,  
Los Angeles County Commission on HIV  
Black/African American Community (BAAC) Task Force

**#EndBlackHIV #KnowYourStatus #EndtheEpidemic #VOTE**

"No place anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." - Martin Luther King, Jr.



# community listening sessions

*These sessions are supported by the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV Black Caucus with generous funding support by UCLA-CDU Center for AIDS Research [Grant AI15250; PI Campbell]*



# faith-based

**Date & Location:** April 26, 6–8 PM at Saint Marks LA

**Facilitators:** Dr. Donta Morrison & Lilieth Conolly

**Participants:** 16 members from Black interfaith communities in LA County

## Key Insights:

- **Stigma & Silence:** Discussed the culture of silence and stigma around sexuality in churches.
- **Inclusivity & Youth Engagement:** Emphasized the importance of safe spaces, youth involvement, and inclusivity in church leadership.
- **Action Steps:** Need for sexual health education, healthcare professionals in church leadership, creative marketing for awareness, and county support tailored for faith communities.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION ON HIV  
BLACK CAUCUS PRESENTS

## BRIDGING FAITH AND SEXUAL HEALTH IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV: EMPOWERING OUR BLACK COMMUNITIES

### COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION\*

Join us for a candid conversation addressing sexual health and HIV within the Black interfaith communities of Los Angeles County.

#### Discussion Topics Include:

- Explore root causes of stigma and shame
- Historical relationship between the church and the LGBTQ+ and gender diverse communities
- Role of the church in promoting sexual health

*Invitation open to faith leaders of Los Angeles County*

**Friday, April 26, 2024**

**6:00PM–8:00PM**

**Los Angeles, CA**

- Location will be shared upon RSVP
- RSVP via QR Code or <https://LACCOHBlackCaucus.eventbrite.com>
- Honorarium, refreshments & resource materials provided



\*The listening sessions are a part of a multi-series community conversation among key populations of the Black community within Los Angeles County to address HIV and sexual health.





# immigrant

**Date & Location:** August 11, 2024, at Airport Royal Cuisine, Los Angeles

**Facilitators:** Damone Thomas & Kofi Peprah

**Participants:** Members of the Black immigrant community, including the African diaspora

## Key Insights:

- **Cultural Barriers:** Stigma around mental health and cultural beliefs hinder open discussions about sexual health.
- **Access Challenges:** Language barriers and healthcare costs create significant obstacles to accessing care.
- **Action Steps:** Emphasized the need for culturally sensitive health resources, building trust with healthcare providers, and community-centric approaches to improve access.



**COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION**

**Are you a member of the Black Immigrant community?  
Your voice matters!**

**We invite you to join us for a candid conversation addressing sexual health and HIV within the Black Immigrant communities of Los Angeles County.**

Discussion topics include: \*Addressing the stigma surrounding sexual health and HIV testing within the Black Immigrant community \*Exploring obstacles and challenges in accessing sexual health services and HIV testing \*Discussing cultural factors that may hinder access to healthcare and testing services within the community \*Identifying opportunities for capacity building initiatives to enhance awareness and knowledge about sexual health and HIV.

**RESOURCES** **FOOD** **GIFT CARDS**

**Sunday, August 11, 2024**  
**5:00PM-7:00PM**

**REGISTER HERE**  
<https://tinyurl.com/3n22k6js>

\*LOCATION TO BE SHARED UPON CONFIRMED REGISTRATION



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US-AFRICA INSTITUTE LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION ON HIV W

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION ON HIV

# same gender loving men (SGLM)

**Date & Location:** September 26, 2024, at APLA Health, Out Here Sexual Health Center, Baldwin Hills

**Facilitators:** Leon Maultsby, MHA & Dr. Donta Morrison

**Participants:** Black and Latino gay and bisexual men, ages 18 to 50+

## Key Insights:

- **Barriers to Access:** Stigma, lack of awareness about resources, and challenges navigating healthcare services hinder access.
- **Generational Differences:** Younger generations are more informed about sexual health, highlighting the need for inclusive education across all age groups.
- **Action Steps:** Emphasized the need for culturally competent healthcare providers, comprehensive awareness campaigns, and safe spaces to address stigma and foster open conversations.

**\*\*UPDATED\*\***

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION ON HIV BLACK CAUCUS INVITES  
**BLACK & LATINX SAME-GENDER LOVING MEN**

**Empower, Engage, Evolve: Sexual Health & HIV Dialogue for Black & Latinx SGL Men**

Join us for a transformative dialogue where Black & Latinx same gender loving (SGL) men can address stigma, explore sexual health, and discuss HIV.

Your experiences and insights will help shape culturally responsive HIV prevention and care systems in LA County.

Don't miss this opportunity to make a lasting impact on our community's health and well-being!

Join Us

**WHEN & WHERE**

Thursday, September 26, 2024  
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
South Los Angeles  
*\*Venue info will be provided upon confirmed registration*

**RSVP REQUIRED**

*Space is Limited*  
<https://tinyurl.com/c6appxma>



**\*\*Participants Will Receive a \$50 Visa Giftcard, Food & Resources\*\***

These sessions are supported by the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV Black Caucus with generous funding support by UCLA-CDU Center for AIDS Research [Grant AI15250, PI Campbell]

APLA Health 



# women

**Date & Location:** October 22, 2024, at Dollarhide Community Center, Compton

**Facilitators:** Danielle Campbell, MPH, PhDc & Dr. Erica Holmes

**Participants:** 19 Black women from Los Angeles County

## Key Insights:

- **Barriers to Care:** Black women face dismissive treatment, microaggressions, and fragmented healthcare services, which impact care quality and accessibility.
- **Cultural Stigma:** Fear of judgment and stereotypes deter many Black women from seeking sexual health services.
- **Action Steps:** Called for integrated care models, culturally competent provider training, and community engagement to reduce stigma and improve access.



## VOICES OF STRENGTH: A LISTENING SESSION FOR BLACK WOMEN



Join us for a **powerful and safe space** dedicated to **Black women**, where your voice matters. This listening session is an opportunity to speak candidly about your **sexual health, HIV, and the unique health challenges faced by Black women**. Together, we will explore our experiences, share insights, and contribute to building a healthcare system that truly understands and meets our needs.



**TUESDAY**  
22ND OCTOBER 2024



**START AT**  
6:00PM - 8:00PM  
\*IN-PERSON; LOCATION WILL BE DISCLOSED  
UPON CONFIRMED REGISTRATION

### WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Open, respectful, and confidential dialogue
- \$50 Visa gift cards, food, and resources provided
- Child watch services available
- Space is limited; RSVP required

**REGISTER NOW**



**EventBrite**  
<https://tinyurl.com/3hvv3w97>

These sessions are supported by the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV Black Caucus with generous funding support by UCLA-CDU Center for AIDS Research [Grant AI15250; PI Campbell]



# community engagement





# taste of soul

**Community Outreach:** Engaged over 500 attendees each year, distributing over 200 wellness bags and offering referral services and HIV and Hepatitis C testing, respectively, in partnership with AMAAD, Inc., and W. King Health Care Group.

**Educational Impact:** Conducted HIV and sexual health trivia, sparking meaningful conversations and dispelling common misconceptions.

**Youth Engagement:** Focused on youth outreach, with the youngest individual tested being 18 years old.

**Team Collaboration:** Success attributed to the dedication of Caucus members and partners who worked tirelessly to educate, assemble wellness bags, and represent the community.



## BLACK CAUCUS AT THE 19TH ANNUAL TASTE OF SOUL LA | OCTOBER 19, 2024

On Saturday, October 19th, the Commission on HIV's Black Caucus proudly joined the 19th Annual Taste of Soul in Los Angeles for a second year in a row. With over 500,000 attendees last year and an even larger crowd anticipated this year, the Black Caucus made a significant impact, promoting its goals and the overarching mission of the Commission.

### Expanding Outreach Through Partnerships

Partnering with AMAAD, Inc., and W. King Health Care Group, the Caucus expanded its outreach by offering free HIV and Hepatitis C testing to the community. Thanks to Caucus members Lilieth Conolly and Arlene Frames, attendees were connected to Dr. King's medical tent for testing, with HIV tests incentivized by \$10 Vons gift cards. Seven HIV tests and five Hep C tests were administered, with all results returning negative. The youngest individual tested was just 18, highlighting the importance of youth outreach.

### Community Engagement and Education

The Black Caucus engaged well over 500 attendees, distributing more than 200 sexual health wellness bags in exchange for participating in HIV and sexual health trivia. The trivia sparked meaningful discussions and helped dispel common misconceptions about HIV.

### Recognizing the Team's Hard Work

We owe the success of this event to the dedication of our Black Caucus team. Special thanks to Leon Maulsby, Danielle Campbell, Bridget and Nina Gordon, Roxanne Lewis, Dee Saunders, Dr. William King, and DonDei Dean, along with the AMAAD team, who held it down and represented! We thank Commission Co-Chair Joseph Green and Consumer Caucus Co-Chair Damone Thomas for coming out and showing their support. A huge thank you to Leon, Sonja Wright, Dee, and Roxanne for assembling over 200 sexual health wellness bags, with special recognition to Dee and Roxanne for their donations on behalf of the City of West Hollywood and JWCH Institute.

### Looking Ahead

This year's Taste of Soul was a tremendous success. We look forward to building on this momentum as we continue our mission to improve health equity and empower our communities.

**If you missed us, check us out here!**

[LA County Commission on HIV](#) | [Live at Taste of soul](#) | [Instagram](#)

[Video Clips](#)

# What's Next?



## Add'l Listening Sessions

Conduct additional sessions with Non-Traditional HIV Providers, Youth, Justice-Involved individuals, and Men who do not identify as MSM.

## Organizational Needs Assessment

Engage agencies that did not participate initially through focus groups, ensuring inclusive input, and pursue the development of a tailored technical assistance program.

## Update Recommendations

Revise and refine existing recommendations based on new insights and ongoing community engagement.

## Community Engagement

Participate in more community events to enhance sexual health awareness and education among our Black communities throughout LA County.

# how can you get involved?

1. **Join the Movement:** Get involved; membership is open! Join our virtual meetings every 3rd Thursday of the month, 4-5 PM. For more info or to join the listserv, contact Dawn McClendon at [dmcclendon@lachiv.org](mailto:dmcclendon@lachiv.org).
2. **Be a Changemaker:** Advocate for policies that support health equity and stand up for culturally responsive healthcare.
3. **Support Our Mission:** Participate in community listening sessions, share resources, and connect with others to amplify community voices.
4. **Lead with Solidarity:** Take part in events and support our responses to key moments—help build a community that listens, cares, and acts.



# la sentinel article

<https://lasentinel.net/l-a-county-commission-on-hivs-black-caucus-hosts-world-aids-day-at-cdu.html>



# with gratitude

We are deeply grateful for the support of the Black Caucus, the Commission on HIV and its staff, DHSP, LA County Supervisorial District 2, Charles R. Drew University, and all of our community partners. As the saying goes, "It takes a village," and we are thankful for ours.  
– Danielle & Leon



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
COMMISSION ON HIV



The Black Caucus of the Los Angeles Commission on HIV is a community-based collective with the unique and specific focus of addressing HIV needs of Black and African-American individuals and communities across Los Angeles County.

The Black Caucus is always excited to welcome those committed to the fight to stop the spread of HIV and increase HIV access and education for the Black communities of LA.



*\*Images reflect actual members of the Black Caucus*

**For more information or to get involved**

WEB: <https://hiv.lacounty.gov> EML: [hivcomm@lachiv.org](mailto:hivcomm@lachiv.org) TEL: 213.738.2816



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