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CONTACT

Aunsha Hall-Everett

1(267) 424-1544

AunshaH@BlackAIDS.org

www.BlackAIDS.org

BLACK AIDS INSTITUTE LAUNCHES BOLD VISION FOR THE FUTURE: ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT OF LONG-TIME LEADER, PHILL WILSON

LOS ANGELES -- Today, as part of a new strategic plan to prepare for the next generation of Black HIV/AIDS response, the Black AIDS Institute (The Institute) [announced the retirement](#) of long time President and CEO, Phill Wilson, later this year.

“In order for a movement to endure, there must be a plan for the future,” said Wilson, in a statement. “Stepping down as the President and CEO of the Institute, where I have had the privilege of serving for the last 19 years, is bittersweet for me.

In 1983, when I started doing this work, none of us could have imagined that a mysterious new disease, first identified at U.C.L.A. Medical Center, would become the defining health issue of our generation. The Institute is committed to doing everything in its power to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic, especially in Black communities. The time is right. The organization has the infrastructure and capacity to do the changes set forth by the Board to prepare for a new generation of capacity building, advocacy, mobilization and service delivery. I am very proud of the work we have done over the last 19 years and of the organization’s commitment to new leadership. That commitment is more important now than ever before.”

Wilson launched the Black AIDS Institute in 1999 with a clear mantra (“Our People, Our Problem, Our Solution”) and mission: to stop the AIDS pandemic in Black communities by engaging and mobilizing Black leaders, institutions and individuals in efforts to confront HIV from a uniquely and unapologetically Black point of view.

From the African American HIV University and Black Treatment Advocates Network, to the ground-breaking State of AIDS in Black America reports and acknowledgements of Black excellence at the annual Heroes in The Struggle Awards Gala, the Institute has been relentless in its focus on Black communities.

“This change is a continuation of that legacy. The search for new executive leadership is a part of a new strategic plan,” says Institute Board Chair, Grazell Howard. “We have brought on new Board members like Representative



(retired) Donna M. Christensen, Dr. David Cook, David Munar and Gina Brown to help us with expand our policy work, our clinical services and add Black-women programs. Under the leadership of Jussie Smollett and Vanessa Williams, we've also re-energized our Black Hollywood Task Force on AIDS with new ambassadors and supporters like Ledisi, Karamo Brown, Taraji P. Henson, Alfre Woodard and Van Jones.”

Board member David Munar, the President and CEO of the Howard Brown Health Center in Chicago, says, “almost every milestone in the fight against AIDS domestically, and in some cases internationally, has been paved by the Black AIDS Institute, and that’s a credit to the Institution and its many supporters and affiliates across the country.”

Wilson leaves the Institute well positioned to take on the challenges of future. The organization is staffed by the next generation of HIV/AIDS activists and organizers, whose work embodies the Institute’s commitment to helping Black communities save themselves through their lived experience. On [World AIDS Day, the Institute launched a new website](#) and a [redesigned Black AIDS Weekly, the organization’s electronic newsletter](#), to more effectively reach people who use smartphones to access health information.

“Every day is Black AIDS Awareness Day at the Black AIDS Institute,” says Raniyah Copeland, the Institute’s Director of Programs. “Our staff are of the communities we serve. We are Black men and women. We are Black people living with HIV/AIDS or at high risk of infection. We live, work, pray and play in the communities we serve. We don’t need to do ‘outreach’ because we are there 24/7.”

Jesse Milan, President and CEO of AIDS United and Chair Emeritus of the Institute’s Board, notes that the Institute has also been developing programs to help end the epidemic through its Los Angeles-based direct-service efforts. On this February 7, [National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day](#), the Institute, in partnership with St. John’s Well Child & Family Center, a federally-qualified community-health center, will [launch the first Black PrEP clinic in Los Angeles](#). Later this spring, the partnership will open a Black men’s primary care clinic in the Leimert Park area of L.A. A Black gay men’s drop-in center will launch in Compton during the fall. “The PrEP clinic, the men’s primary care clinic and the Black gay men’s drop-in center will help us achieve a new dimension of our mission,” Milan says.

The Black AIDS Institute is “going where the epidemic’s trajectory is calling it to go,” says Munar, who calls the new initiatives “excellent examples” of how the organization is transforming in ways that will allow it to thrive. “It’s exactly what every community needs to be doing. The Institute wants to do it first in its own backyard, then help others across the country replicate similar strategies.”

“For those of us who have been doing the work and standing with Phill shoulder-to-shoulder for many years, it will be hard to imagine this work without him,” said Munar. “But this transition is not about Phill Wilson, it’s really about a mission, a vision, a commitment to mobilize a community, to leverage influence wherever we can, to eliminate AIDS and make this world a better place for people who are affected by HIV.”

“This is an important moment,” says Munar. “Phill is passing the baton onto a newer generation. He’s leaving the organization on a strong footing so that it can continue to march forward.”



The search for a new President and CEO for the Black AIDS Institute is being conducted by the Morten Group out of Chicago. Inquiries and resumes can be sent to executivesearch@mortengroup.com

ABOUT THE BLACK AIDS INSTITUTE

Founded in May of 1999, the [Black AIDS Institute](#) is the only national HIV/AIDS think tank in the US focused exclusively on Black people. The Institute's Mission is to stop the AIDS pandemic in Black communities by engaging and mobilizing Black leaders, institutions and individuals in efforts to confront HIV. The Institute interprets public and private sector HIV policies, conducts trainings, offers technical assistance, disseminates information, conducts health screenings, delivers primary care and linkage to care services, and provides advocacy mobilization from a uniquely and unapologetically Black point of view. The Institute's motto: "OUR PEOPLE, OUR PROBLEM, OUR SOLUTION."

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