



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Andrew Spieldenner, Communication Committee Chair

sphazs@hofstra.edu 516-463-5955

The Voice of HIV at AIDSWatch 2014

April 14, 2014 --- The United States People Living with HIV Caucus (HIV Caucus) is co-organizing - with [Treatment Access Expansion Project](#) and [AIDS United](#) - AIDSWatch 2014 on April 28-April 29 in Washington, DC. AIDSWatch is the largest annual national constituent-based advocacy event focused on HIV in the United States. AIDSWatch brings together HIV-positive advocates and their allies with the purpose of educating members of Congress and their staff about HIV. Participants will be provided with training that focuses on current science, legislative agendas, and how to effectively conduct meetings with their elected officials.

HIV Caucus members reflect on their involvement with AIDSWatch:

- Caribbean American woman and HIV activist Deloris Dockrey, of the International Community of Women North America and New Jersey's Hyacinth Foundation, states, "AIDS Watch is the only organized and structured opportunity that people living with HIV and their allies have to educate congressional representatives of the plight of HIV in their states. AIDS Watch consistently puts a face to the epidemic."
- "AIDSWatch was created to give people living with HIV much more than education and empowerment. AIDSWatch allows us ownership to end this devastating and demoralizing disease," said Larry Bryant, from Campaign 2 End AIDS, Housing Works, and the HIV Caucus Steering Committee.
- Single mother and HIV Caucus Steering Committee member, Tami Haught of Positive Iowans Taking Charge, states, "My best memories of AIDSWatch was in 2009 when I was able to take my son [Adrian] with me. We participated in a demonstration in front of the Washington Mayor's office with C2EA. I was also able to introduce Adrian to legislators and staffers to solidify the message that anyone can be infected and we are all affected by HIV. They could see my family."
- "AIDSWatch gives me a chance to come to Washington DC and speak my voice. There are over 15 thousand of us [in Colorado], we vote and we expect to be heard. We are silent no more, we are passive no more, we are stigmatized no more. We expect change and we expect Colorado elected officials to lead it," asserts Barb Cardell, Colorado-based HIV activist and HIV Caucus Vice-Chair.



- "AIDSWatch is a critical opportunity for people living with HIV to share their story and educate lawmakers on the need for funding and other legislative efforts. Our testimony will help improve health outcomes and promote policies that will help to reduce stigma and new HIV infections," said Michael Emanuel Rajner, a Florida-based HIV Activist and HIV Caucus Steering Committee member.
- Dr. Andrew Spieldenner, HIV activist and Assistant Professor of Rhetoric at Hofstra University, says, "AIDS Watch continues to inspire me. When I went to my first one, I was cynical. But I saw everyday people – who happen to have HIV – get together and tell their stories to people that had never met someone with HIV from their region. From gay men to substance users, it was thought-provoking and powerful. We deserve to have our voice on Capitol Hill, like any other constituency. There is power in people living with HIV determining our own agenda. No one else owns our voice."

AIDSWatch 2014 is expected to bring together hundreds of HIV advocates with the purpose and hope of raising awareness of HIV issues to the elected officials who are able to make policy changes. For more information about AIDSWatch, please feel free to visit: www.hivcaucus.org. To register for AIDSWatch and learn more about the program, please go to: <http://www.aidsunited.org/policy-advocacy/aidswatch-2014/>

###

The United States People Living with HIV Caucus is a group of organizations, networks, client groups, and individuals with HIV advocating for people living with HIV in the U.S. The Caucus is dedicated to being a platform for a united voice for people living with HIV in the US. For more information, see the website: www.hivcaucus.org.