

**National Coalition of Black Women
Omaha Chapter, Inc.**



HEALTH

African Americans face significant health disparities across many of the deadliest diseases. These include heart disease, stroke, cancers (lung, prostate, cervical and breast cancers), diabetes, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, hypertension, substance abuse, community, domestic and family violence, and mental health. The National Coalition of 100 Black Women- Omaha Metropolitan Chapter, advocates for women of color to assure that the disparities are reduced and ultimately eliminated, assuring that women have optimal mental and physical health. Our focus is on this four-prong approach:

Self-care: By preventing health problems before they occur, recognizing symptoms and early warning signs and understanding all of the options available for our specific health situations, we reduce the chances of being overcome by sudden health emergencies. NCBW advocates for every woman to put herself first and provide the self-care necessary for a healthy mental and physical life.

Savvy health care consumers: Women must get the most from their health care systems and have a mutually respectful relationship with their health care providers. NCBW encourages women to use the tools and local resources available to be fully knowledgeable about their health and health options.

Authoritative self-advocates: Health disparities that affect one black woman, affect us all. We unite women to take action as part of a collective voice for services, policies and legislation that are in the best interests of the health and well-being of all Black women.

Access to trusted health information: Health care providers, educators, researchers, policy makers, the media, health industries and everyone committed to closing the health gaps that exist for Black women, must have access to the latest trends, research, and treatments available.

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

Our local and national health platform is to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS in the African American community, and to specifically address the causes of the persistent spread of this disease among African American women. [More information.](#)

AIDS remains the leading cause of death of African Americans in the United States. More specifically, the statistics for Black women in the U.S. are as follows:

- AIDS is the leading cause of death for Black women between the ages of 24-34.
- Black women account for 72 percent of new HIV/AIDS cases among women.
- Black women are 19 times as likely as White women to have HIV/AIDS and 13 times more likely to die from the disease.

NCBW strives to highlight and educate Black women across a broad spectrum on the impact of HIV/AIDS and to stimulate local effective action to prevent the further spread of the disease in the black community.

Many things prevent black women from seeking prevention or sustaining treatment for HIV/AIDS: Racism, sexism, drug abuse, socioeconomic status, poverty, educational level and low self-esteem. Each of these barriers fuels the spread of HIV among black women, and thus black families. Accurate and comprehensive information dissemination by and for Blacks is key to combating this epidemic. Black women must be involved and engaged in education, empowerment, and mobilization. We must also develop a network of women from diverse backgrounds that can speak “peer-to-peer” about the myths and the facts around HIV/AIDS ~ this is critical to the acceptance of the magnitude of the disease in Black communities and the development of an effective response.

NCBW Omaha provides local advocacy & awareness programs, such as the “Sisters Get Real Campaign” to accomplish the following:

THE FACTS

HIV/AIDS has had a devastating impact on people of color in the United States. More than 54% of HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed in 2002 were African-Americans. We are 10 times more likely to die of AIDS than our white counterparts.

African-American women are the fastest growing population with AIDS in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control, despite the advances in knowledge and treatment, women in the United States, and particularly in Omaha, still must confront two growing epidemics: HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

African-American and Hispanic women together represent less than one-fourth of all U.S. women, yet they account for more than three-fourths (78%) of AIDS cases reported among women in the United States. AIDS is among the top three causes of death in African American women ages 25-34. More than 64% of HIV positive infants are African American.

Knowledge about preventive behaviors and awareness of the need to practice them is critical for each and every generation of young women.

- Raise awareness about the magnitude of HIV/AIDS in the Black community
- Increase the capacity of Black women to build effective responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Black communities.
- Create a local network & contribute to a national network of Black women committed to ending the AIDS epidemic among Black women.

Ultimately, we believe that a collective, persistent focus on the pervasive impact of this disease will result in a local and national call to action for Black women to destroy this disease in our communities.

HIV is passed through:

- Sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal, or oral) with an HIV-infected person
- Sharing needles or injection equipment with an injection drug user who is infected with HIV
- HIV-infected women to babies before or during birth or through breastfeeding after birth (peri-natal transmission)
- Transfusions of infected blood

The leading cause of HIV infection among African-American women is sexual contact with infected men (heterosexual contact). Often these men do not identify themselves as homosexual and are said to be “on the down low,” leading a secret life unknown to their female partners.

The leading cause of HIV infection among African-American men is sexual contact with other men.

HIV destroys certain kinds of blood cells, which are crucial to the normal function of our body’s immune system to fight illness. Although many new drugs have been developed to help treat HIV, there is no cure for AIDS, which is caused by HIV. If you have any sexual contact (vaginal, anal, oral) with an HIV-infected person or you use intravenous drugs, you are at high risk for HIV/AIDS. Sisters, Get REAL and STOP the spread of HIV/AIDS Today!