



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NASTAD COMMEMORATES API HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY

Washington, D.C. — The National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD) joins federal, state, and local partners on Thursday, May 19, 2006 in commemorating the second annual National Asian and Pacific Islander (API) HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. This observance day intends to raise awareness among Asians and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. about the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS. API HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is a part of the [Banyan Tree Project \(BTP\)](#), a multi-year program to promote acceptance and fight HIV-related discrimination and stigma among API communities in the U.S. Funded by the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), BTP is inspired by similar HIV/AIDS initiatives in the Black and Hispanic communities which also have national observance days to raise awareness of the disease and its impact.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an estimated 1.039 million to 1.185 million HIV-positive individuals are currently living in the U.S. AIDS has killed more than 20 million people since the first cases were diagnosed in 1981. For APIs, one of the fastest-growing ethnic/racial populations in the U.S., HIV/AIDS is on the rise. CDC statistics show that the number of APIs living with AIDS has climbed by more than 10 percent in each of the last five years. The number of adult and adolescent APIs diagnosed with AIDS through 2004 was 7,317.

Among APIs living in the U.S. and its territories:

- Between 1999 and 2003, HIV/AIDS diagnoses among APIs increased by 34 percent.
- Most APIs living with HIV/AIDS live on the east and west coasts and in Chicago, Hawaii, and Guam. More than one-third of APIs with HIV/AIDS live in New York City and San Francisco.
- The main risk factor for API men is sex with other men, while the main risk factor for API women is sex with men.
- APIs are less likely than others to get tested for HIV.
- Stigma and negative attitudes toward APIs affected by HIV/AIDS increase their risk and prevent them from getting health services.

”We must strive to reduce and ultimately eliminate the stigma of HIV/AIDS in the API community, and in all communities of color,” stated Julie Scofield, NASTAD’s Executive

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Director. “Education and awareness are key in these efforts and API Awareness Day provides an opportunity for us to strengthen our response to HIV/AIDS in API communities,” she continued.

NASTAD and the [Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum \(APIAHF\)](#) are collaborating to identify and respond to the continued challenges facing state and local health departments, in response to the HIV prevention needs of their Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities. An advisory committee comprised of senior health department staff and API community leaders began developing a document that focuses on key administrative policy recommendations for health departments to adapt or tailor their HIV prevention efforts in API communities. Focal areas include HIV/AIDS data collection and reporting, community access to culturally and linguistically competent HIV prevention services, and leadership development. The report is expected to be released in fall 2006.

Founded in 1992, NASTAD is a nonprofit national association of state health department HIV/AIDS program directors who have programmatic responsibility for administering HIV/AIDS health care, prevention, education, and supportive services programs funded by state and federal governments. NASTAD’s mission is to strengthen state and territory-based leadership, expertise, and advocacy and bring them to bear in reducing the incidence of HIV infection, and in providing care and support to all who live with HIV/AIDS. NASTAD’s vision is a world free of HIV/AIDS. For more information, visit www.NASTAD.org.

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