

Assembly Recognizes National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

“Someone once shared with me that the number seven was a lucky number. I had no idea how lucky the number actually was until today,” said Clarmundo Sullivan Executive Director of Golden Rule Services, reflecting on a string of coincidental happenings. “Golden Rule Services celebrated its seventh year in existence and the seventh year observance of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, on the seventh day of February in 2007!”

And while there were plenty of reasons to celebrate GRS’s seventh year in existence, there was also cause to celebrate its contribution to making February 7 National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in California.

Last year Sullivan submitted a written request (including statistics and sample resolution) to Assemblyman Mervyn M. Dymally’s office asking to have the California Assembly join other state legislatures in making February 7 National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. However, because the correspondence was received near the closing of its session, it was tabled.

“I was very disappointed to learn that the resolution process for National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day had to be tabled last year,” said Sullivan.

“Considering the disproportionate rates of HIV/AIDS in the African American community, I felt that the issue needed immediate attention, maximum visibility and

community support. I felt that an Assembly resolution would not only increase the epidemic’s visibility but would encourage groups within local jurisdictions to conduct HIV/AIDS education, disseminate HIV risk reduction materials and encourage HIV antibody testing.”

However, this February, Sullivan was contacted by Dymally’s office and informed that House Resolution 4 – Relative to National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, passed the Assembly by a 74 to 0 vote. The Assembly of the State of California now not only acknowledges February 7 as National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness day, but encourages Californians to strongly support this day and participate in events planned to commemorate the occasion.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that African Americans represent approximately 13 percent of the U.S. population but account for 49 percent of the nations AIDS



community and those that loved them took action,” said Sullivan “They protested, raised awareness, created their own programs, and demanded that the government allocate resources to address the issue. I wish we could see the same level of activism, visibility and resources in the African American community now that the epidemic has shifted.”

Golden Rule Services had made HIV prevention for targeting the African American community its highest priority. It currently has Sacramento’s only HIV prevention programs targeting local African American gay, bi and “down low” adult and young men who have sex with men.

Golden Rule Services would like to encourage grantmakers, local charities and community members to help raise funds necessary to address HIV/AIDS in the African American community.

If you would like to support GRS’s efforts, please contact Clarmundo Sullivan at (916) 427-4653.

cases.

“At the beginning of the epidemic, when we saw similar

rates among Caucasian gay males, it gained national attention and members of the

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