



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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September 12, 2008 – Miami, FL – The closing plenary of the 2008 United States Conference on AIDS (USCA), “HIV/AIDS Challenge for Gay Men and Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM)”, is set for 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., on September 21, 2008, in Hall A of the Greater Ft. Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center. Sean Strub, founder of *POZ Magazine*, will moderate an exemplary panel of speakers offering different perspectives on the impact HIV/AIDS has had on this population in relation to stigma, prevention, care and treatment in relation to HIV/AIDS.

Paul A. Kawata, Executive Director the National Minority AIDS Council, sponsor of USCA, says, “The need for open, honest dialogue about the impact of HIV/AIDS on gay men and MSM has never been more pressing. The rates of HIV/AIDS are rising, especially among gay men and MSM of color. This is particularly alarming in light of the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) recent announcement that over 55,000 new cases of HIV – not 40,000 as previously thought – occur in the U.S. each year, with 56,300 being reported in 2006 alone.”

African Americans account for nearly half of the cases in 2006, at 45%, followed by Latinos at 17%. In Miami-Dade County, the most heavily populated county in Florida, at least 1 in 8 black and white MSM, and 1 in 12 Latino MSM, are living with HIV/AIDS. Native Americans and Asian and Pacific Islanders are reporting increasing rates of HIV/AIDS. Many of those in these communities living with HIV/AIDS are gay men and MSM.

Speakers at the closing plenary will include:

- Rashad Burgess, Acting Chief of the Capacity Building Branch, Division of HIV/AIDS, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Tommy Chesbro, Board Member of the National Minority AIDS Council; Co-Chair of the Racial and Ethnic Minority Advisory Committee, National Institutes of Health, Office of AIDS Research; and past member of the Education Advisory Committee for the Association of American Indian Physicians.
- Wilson Cruz, Actor and HIV/AIDS activist
- Jack Mackenroth, Renowned fashion designer and HIV/AIDS activist
- Esera Tuaolo, Former NFL football player of the Atlanta Falcons
- Jose Antonio Vargas, Pulitzer Prize winning reporter of the *Washington Post*

Martha Wash, best known for performing on the Weather Girls’ hit, “It’s Raining Men,” will perform.

About USCA

The 2008 United States Conference on AIDS (USCA) will take place September 18-21, in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, at Greater Ft. Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center. Since 1997, USCA, the

largest annual HIV/AIDS meeting in the United States, has strengthened the domestic community-based response to HIV/AIDS by bringing together professionals from across the country to learn new skills and build partnerships and collaborations.

The conference's extensive selection of over 200 institutes, seminars, workshops and roundtables sessions addressing every aspect of the AIDS epidemic – from nutrition and treatment to prevention and international issues – enables participants to customize their training and networking experiences according to their unique professional needs. To learn more about USCA, visit: www.2008USCA.org; call: (202) 483-NMAC (6622); or e-mail: conferences@nmac.org.

About USCA's Sponsor, NMAC

The National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC) has developed leadership within communities of color to address the challenges of HIV/AIDS since 1987. NMAC has furthered this mission by providing a public policy education program; national and regional trainings and conferences; treatment and research programs and trainings; numerous publications; and a website: www.nmac.org. The agency also serves an association of AIDS service organizations, faith- and community-based organizations, hospitals, clinics, health departments and other groups assisting people and families. NMAC's advocacy efforts are funded through private funders and donors only. For more information, call: (202) 483-NMAC (6622) or visit: www.nmac.org.