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30 for 30 Campaign applauds inclusion of women's health needs in new National HIV/AIDS Strategy

The 30 for 30 Campaign commends the White House Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP) for developing an updated National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS) that makes great strides in better addressing the needs of women living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. The 30 for 30 Campaign is pleased at the explicit inclusion of Black women and transgender women as prioritized populations in the NHAS, which reflects a recognition that women continue to be greatly impacted by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Women of color, in particular, are disproportionately impacted by HIV. Black and Latina women account for 80% of new HIV cases among women, although they comprise only 13% and 16% of the total female population, respectively.¹ Additionally, the incorporation of a focus on the South throughout the NHAS is critical to address the epidemic among women. While women account for one in four people living with HIV in the United States, in many jurisdictions in the South the rate is even higher,² such as in Louisiana, where women represent nearly a third of the HIV epidemic.³ The Strategy's commitment to address intimate partner violence and the effects of trauma and factors that increase risk of violence for women and girls living with HIV will help achieve better health outcomes for women living with HIV.

While the new strategy did a commendable job at incorporating many issues critical to prevention and care for women living with and affected by HIV, the Strategy failed to attend to the needs of sex workers. Moreover, while the NHAS identified various actions key to integrating HIV and sexual and reproductive health care for women, including support for the development of women-controlled prevention methods and screening pregnant women for HIV, the NHAS missed the opportunity to affirm the need to broadly integrate HIV care with sexual and reproductive health care. For example, the Strategy failed to include any mention of preconception care, issues of fertility or conception desires of women living with HIV. The 30 for 30 Campaign supports the many innovative and crucial goals and provisions of the NHAS and seeks to work with ONAP to ensure that issues relevant to sexual and reproductive health of people living with HIV, as well as the HIV prevention and care needs of sex workers, are included in the federal action plan, slated for release on World AIDS Day, December 1, 2015.

"The 30 for 30 Campaign applauds the progress and commitment ONAP has made in improving HIV care and prevention services under the Obama Administration. We are pleased that the Administration furthered its commitment to women through the release of this new Strategy that takes into account previous shortfalls in meeting the care and prevention needs of women," said 30 for 30 Campaign chair, C. Virginia Fields. The Campaign looks forward to support implementation of the 2015 NHAS and to support measures that meet these goals. We are grateful that the new NHAS moves us closer to an AIDS-free generation by addressing the health of women and families.

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30 for 30 Campaign is a coordinating body of HIV and reproductive health organizations from every region of the country working to ensure that the unique needs of women living with and affected by HIV, including transgender women, are addressed in all relevant HIV funding, programs, and policies.

¹ <http://kff.org/hivaids/fact-sheet/women-and-hivaids-in-the-united-states/>

² <http://southernaidsstrategy.org/research/>

³ http://www.dhh.state.la.us/assets/oph/HIVSTD/hiv-aids/2015/Fourth_Quarter_2014.pdf