

Black Women's Initiative Convenes Executive Leaders to Discuss HIV Disparities

This White House meeting explored how C-suite leaders can help reduce HIV disparities impacting Black women. [VIDEO]

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The Office of Infectious Disease and HIV/AIDS Policy's (OIDP) Black Women's Initiative (BWI) brought together C-Suite leaders at The White House to discuss mobilizing their networks to address HIV disparities among Black women.

The Black Women's Initiative (BWI) convened a full-day meeting at The White House on January 10, 2025, focusing on the role that C-Suite leaders can play in reducing HIV disparities impacting Black women in the United States. More than 35 C-Suite leaders and other participants came together to examine the state of Black women and HIV in the U.S., discuss how C-Suite leaders can mobilize their networks to address HIV in the Black community, and develop actionable steps aimed at improving HIV outcomes for Black women both within their organizations and in the broader community. This powerful meeting was co-facilitated by Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (PACHA) members Tori Cooper, MPH, and Dafina Ward, JD, whose leadership and expertise were instrumental in guiding the discussions and shaping the outcomes of the event.

The BWI is a project of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Infectious Disease and HIV/AIDS Policy (OIDP). Its goal is to bring a national coordinated effort to engage Black women of cis and transgender experience to improve the lives and well-being of Black women affected by HIV. The BWI convenes leaders of community- and issue-driven organizations, nonprofits, associations, public health and healthcare organizations, government agencies, private sector groups, and others to help further their ability to address the unique needs of Black women in America. A BWI internal federal working group was established to facilitate updates and coordinate efforts centering Black women across federal agencies using a unified approach.

"For this meeting, we intentionally convened powerful trailblazers and thought leaders from different fields who don't necessarily do HIV work daily," said Kaye Hayes, HHS Deputy Assistant Secretary for Infectious Disease and OIDP Director. "Their unique perspectives and commitments will help advance our collective ability to address the unique needs of Black women affected by HIV in the U.S."

At the meeting, Hayes spoke with Dr. Virginia Caine, President of the National Medical Association. View their conversation about key takeaways from the meeting, including how to change communications to women about HIV and raise awareness about the disease:

OIDP ORISE Fellow Arielle Desir also spoke with Portia Reddick White, Vice President of Advocacy and Policy at the National Council of Negro Women, and Kristina Savoy, CEO of The Savoy Group, about opportunities to improve the lives and well-being of Black women in the context of HIV and actions moving forward. View their conversation:

Desir also had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Vikki Walton, Senior Principal and Health Equity Leader at MercerWELL, on the business response to the HIV epidemic. View their conversation:

“As with previous convenings, this meeting gave us an opportunity to connect, assess the current landscape, learn from each other, and identify next steps specific to Black women,” said OIDP Engagement Team Lead and BWI Co-Lead CAPT Jyl Martin. See below for information about previous meetings.

“The diverse perspectives and commitments of these thought leaders, along with insights from previous convenings and the BWI internal federal working group, highlight the need to amplify the voices and needs of Black women in the broader HIV discourse,” said her colleague OIDP Health Impact Lead and BWI Co-Lead Dr. Marissa Robinson.

Previous BWI Meetings

In Summer 2024, the BWI hosted convenings in Washington, D.C., co-facilitated by HIV leaders Raniyah Copeland, MPH, LáDeia Joyce, MBA, and Marissa Miller, to address the health and well-being needs of Black women of both cisgender and transgender experiences, with a focus on HIV prevention, treatment, and care. Later that year, during the U.S. Conference on HIV/AIDS, an OIDP-hosted workshop titled “Make It Make Sense: HIV Care & Prevention for Southern Black Women” highlighted BWI’s outreach efforts, emphasizing community-driven solutions and the importance of centering Black women in HIV care and prevention discussions. More highlights from these impactful convenings will be shared next month.

Learn more:

- [For Us, By Us – OIDP’s New Initiative Will Address Unique Needs of Black Women in the HIV Response](#)
- [HIV.gov FYI video on the BWI’s purpose, goals, and vision](#)

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