DaBaby Hasn't Followed Up or Supported HIV Causes, Say AIDS Groups

After making stigmatizing HIV remarks this summer, rap star DaBaby met with Black AIDS leaders. What has happened since?

December 6, 2021 By Trent Straube

World AIDS Day 2021 has come and gone. The annual day of observance, marked December 1, offers a chance to remember loved ones lost to the virus, praise those fighting the epidemic and raise general awareness of HIV/AIDS. Individuals, businesses and nonprofits around the world participate. One person who doesn't seem to have taken part, though, is rap star DaBaby.

His failure to participate in any World AIDS Day event was notable because of the HIV-related controversy he set off this summer. In July, during a Rolling Loud Miami concert, he made a string of controversial comments, including insults about people living with HIV. A public backlash followed—along with celebrity offers to educate him—and he was dropped from several upcoming gigs. About a month later, DaBaby met with the leaders of various Black HIV organizations, who had signed an open letter addressed to him in an effort to "call him in instead of calling him out." According to those AIDS advocates, the meeting with the celebrity was productive. They issued a joint statement that read in part:

> During our meeting, DaBaby was genuinely engaged, apologized for the inaccurate and hurtful comments he made about people living with HIV and received our personal stories and the truth about HIV and its impact on Black and LGBTQ communities with deep respect. We appreciate that he openly and eagerly participated in this forum of Black people living with HIV, which provided him an opportunity to learn and to receive accurate information.

What DaBaby has done with that information is anybody's guess. Several of the HIV advocacy groups that met with the rapper told The Daily Beast that they haven't heard from him since the meeting. What's more, he hasn't donated to their organizations.

"Since [the August meeting], we have not received any outreach, partnership or funding from DaBaby," Pavni Guharoy, a communications consultant for the Black AIDS Institute, told The Daily Beast in an article titled "HIV/AIDS Orgs: DaBaby Ghosted Us and Didn't Donate a Dime," published on World AIDS Day.

“The onus is now on him,” Guharoy continued, “if he chooses to, to convert his misinformation into allyship by supporting the work of the Black AIDS Institute and other people of color-led HIV organizations.”

Three of the nine advocacy groups that met with DaBaby told The Daily Beast that the artist hasn’t followed up with them or donated funds (the other six didn’t return calls from the news outlet). Venita Ray, the co–executive director of Positive Women’s Network, added that PWN-USA remained open to meeting with DaBaby and partnering with him.

What’s more, The Daily Beast points out that DaBaby deleted his earlier apology from his social media. And yet it seems that much has been forgiven since this summer’s controversy. DaBaby is back on tour with Rolling Loud. “Rolling Loud supports second chances, and we believe DaBaby has grown and learned from his experience,” the company said in a statement about the tour.

Meanwhile, another rap star of 2021 has shown the world how to raise awareness and funds for HIV/AIDS groups while enjoying a string of No. 1 hits. For more details, see “Lil Nas X Visits Black HIV Groups, Raises $100K for Southern AIDS Efforts” and “How Lil Nas X Boosts Morale and Raises HIV Funds.” In related news, read “Connect and Inspire Black Gay Men? There’s an App for That: THRIVE 365.”

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