



**National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA)**  
8401 Colesville Road, Suite 750  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**December 10, 2007**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Kali Lindsey**  
*Director of Federal Government Affairs*  
**Office: (240) 247-1019**  
**Cell: (301) 768-2663**

**NAPWA URGES PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES  
TO OPPOSE AIDS STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Raising deep objections to Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee’s un-recanted support for such stigmatizing and ill-informed policies as “quarantine” for persons living with HIV/AIDS, the National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA) urged all presidential candidates today to denounce AIDS-related stigma and discrimination, which only helps to fuel the HIV/AIDS pandemic around the world.

NAPWA fears that Huckabee’s refusal to denounce his 1992 comments could generate a new wave of stigma and discrimination against people with HIV in the U.S. and around the world. “Twenty six years into this epidemic, such outrageous ideas as quarantine for all people with HIV/AIDS have no place in serious public policy debates of a free and enlightened society,” said Frank Oldham, Jr. NAPWA’s Executive Director. “This rhetoric only serves to heighten already severe stigma and discrimination against HIV-positive people and deter our collective efforts to engage the community in voluntary HIV testing, treatment, and other vital services.”

In light of recent articles discussing the soon to be released updated HIV incidence numbers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), many wonder when our country’s leadership will pay attention to and provide increased resources for HIV prevention education and interventions which have proven to be effective.

-- more --

“CDC has estimated that the majority of sexual transmissions of HIV in the US are from persons living with HIV but who don’t even know they are infected. Further, once someone learns that they are living with HIV, the transmission rate drops dramatically,” says public health expert and NAPWA board member David Holtgrave, Ph.D. “The majority of persons living with HIV do not engage in behavior that puts partners at risk for infection. Clearly, the public health answer to prevention of HIV transmission is not isolation, but rather is a combination of awareness of one’s HIV status, linkage to prevention services, and if diagnosed positive, access to necessary HIV care and treatment.”

Many believe that this development could be very dangerous for people with HIV as well as for the work being done to stop the spread of the disease. In the nation’s capital, HIV is being discussed as a “modern epidemic” which has disproportionate impact on African American, gay male, and injection drug using communities.

“Sentiments such as Huckabee’s that suggests isolation of persons with HIV, further illustrate a clear disregard for the humanity of those communities who have experienced the greatest impact by this disease and the lack of a true investment in making a difference,” said Kali Lindsey, NAPWA’s director of federal government affairs.

Huckabee’s remarks contradict the compassion expressed by First Lady Laura Bush in her very eloquent World AIDS Day [statement](#), calling for all Americans to show compassion toward people living with HIV/AIDS and to unite in the fight against the disease. Reminding us that HIV infects and affects people in all spectrums of society, this sentiment stands as an inspirational road map for the thoughtful organizing, planning and collaboration needed from all to make progress against HIV/AIDS.

Founded in 1983, NAPWA-US is the oldest coalition of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world as well as the oldest national AIDS organization in the United States. NAPWA advocates on behalf of the greater than *one million* people living with HIV and AIDS.