

23RD NAESM NATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ON HEALTH DISPARITIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE



Bridges Not Barriers:
Creating a Path to Equity,
Access and Justice



HISTORI
HIV Implementation Science
to Optimize Research Impact



HIV



**POSITIVE IMPACT
HEALTH CENTERS**



WashU Arts & Sciences
African and African American Studies



live like an icon

May 28-31, 2026

Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa at the Convention Center, Montgomery, AL 36104



SILENCING STIGMA FOR ALL

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER.

Despite the progress we've made as a community, the stigma surrounding HIV still persists. It takes an ongoing commitment from all of us to correct the misinformation and common misperceptions that stand in the way of people knowing their status. Together, we're educating about the importance of testing, early treatment, and prevention. We are collectively working on the ground with community organizations, organizing local events, and sharing resources to make sure everyone has the information they need to get the care they deserve. We're working together to end the HIV epidemic for everyone, everywhere.



GILEAD | HIV

GileadHIV.com

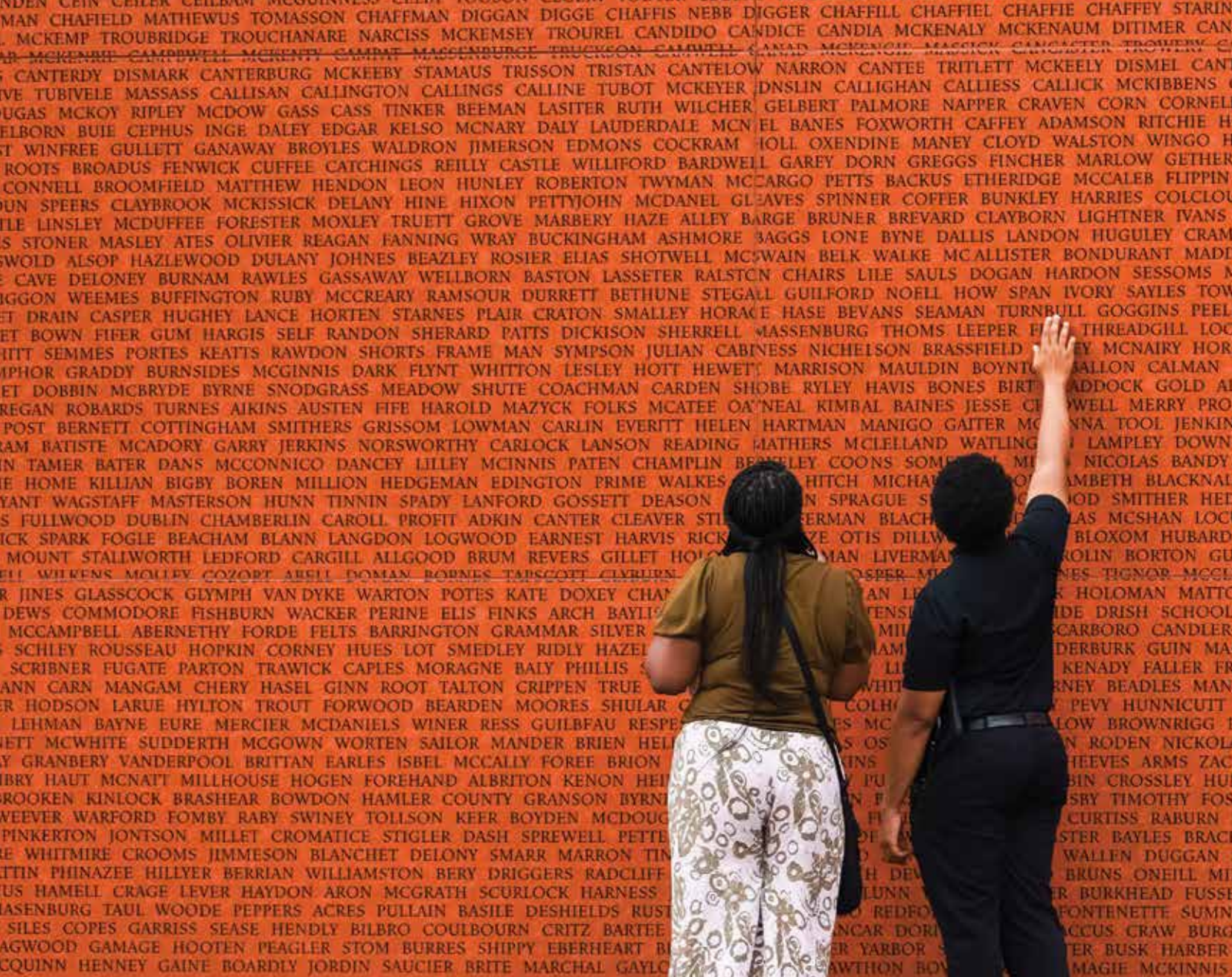
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TOGETHER WE IGNITE CHANGE

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 [@GileadHIVUS](https://www.facebook.com/GileadHIVUS)



MONTGOMERY MOVES YOU.

To meetings with meaning.

In Montgomery, history isn't behind glass—it's alive, powerful, and deeply moving. Visitors walk in the footsteps of giants, sit where Rosa Parks stood her ground, and engage with stories that resonate across generations. The EJI Legacy Sites, three unforgettable places tracing America's history of racial injustice and the ongoing fight for social justice, offer itinerary-ready experiences that invite reflection and connection. In a walkable downtown, these impactful sites sit alongside hotels, restaurants, and venues, making it easy to build meaningful moments into any agenda.



Start planning at [EXPERIENCEMONTGOMERYAL.ORG](https://www.experiencemontgomeryal.org)

EXPERIENCE THE **FREEDOM MONUMENT SCULPTURE PARK**



City of **Montgomery**, Alabama

Dear Delegates, Advocates, and Friends of NAESM,

On behalf of the people of Montgomery, it is my honor to welcome you to Alabama’s capital city for the 23rd Annual NAESM National African American Leadership Conference on Health Disparities and Social Justice. We are grateful that you have chosen to convene here from May 28–31, 2026, and to gather at the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa at the Convention Center—an anchor of our vibrant downtown and a gateway to the history, hospitality, and heart of our community.

Your theme—“Bridges not Barriers: Creating a Path to Equity, Access and Justice”—speaks to the very soul of this city. Montgomery helped shape the conscience of a nation through everyday people who stood together for dignity and equal rights. As you work to advance health equity, dismantle disparities, and uplift LGBTQ+ communities—especially Black gay, bisexual, and same-gender-loving men—know that you are building on a legacy that calls us to bring people together across lines of difference, to move from division to understanding, and from aspiration to action.

Montgomery is proud to stand with you in that work. In our city, we believe public health is both a moral commitment and a measure of justice. It requires listening to communities most impacted, investing in culturally responsive care, and ensuring that prevention, treatment, and support are accessible to all. It means confronting stigma with empathy, replacing barriers with bridges, and creating systems that honor every person’s humanity. Your conference—bringing advocates, healthcare providers, policymakers, researchers, and community leaders into one room—embodies the kind of coalition that changes outcomes and transforms lives.

While you are here, I hope you will take time to experience places that illuminate our shared story and inspire deeper purpose. Our civil rights landmarks, museums, and riverfront spaces invite reflection and renewal. They remind us that progress is possible when courage is collective and when communities commit to walking forward together.

To NAESM’s leaders and partners: thank you for more than two decades of steadfast, trailblazing work. Your persistence has saved lives, shaped policy, and opened doors for communities too often left out of the conversation. To every delegate: may this convening renew your energy, deepen your connections, and equip you with practical tools and a hope-filled vision. And to all who labor in public health and social justice: your service is the bridge—linking knowledge to compassion, and compassion to change. Montgomery is grateful for your presence and proud to be the backdrop for your continued leadership.

Welcome to Montgomery—and thank you for the work you do. May your days here be productive, your conversations courageous, and your path forward marked by equity, access, and justice for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven L. Reed', written in a cursive style.

Steven L. Reed

Dear Conference Family,

Welcome, and thank you for being here.

I want to begin by saying how deeply grateful I am for the trust placed in me to lead this organization, especially at a moment like this. That trust is not something I take lightly.



Throughout our time together this year, we will be intentional about honoring the legacy of Dr. Quamina. His vision is not just a part of

NAESM's history—it is foundational to who we are today. Our responsibility is to carry that vision forward, not just in words, but in the work itself—making sure it is not only remembered, but fully realized in everything we do.

Whether this is your first time joining us or you have been part of the NAESM community for years, we are grateful you chose to gather in this space. This convening is something we build together: a place to learn, develop solutions that strengthen our community, build meaningful relationships, and recharge.

This year's theme, *“Bridges Not Barriers: Creating a Path to Equity, Access, and Justice”*, reflects exactly why NAESM continues to lead. Our communities deserve healthcare systems and public policies rooted in dignity, respect, and real access—not obstacles, stigma, or silence. The work we do together advances progress across prevention, care, treatment, policy, and research—and, most importantly, supports the people and communities at the center of this movement.

For many years, this conference has served as a premier annual gathering focused on the health and wellbeing of Black gay, bisexual, and same-gender-loving men, alongside organizations and professionals serving Black MSM (men who have sex with men). While HIV is still a critical part of the conversation, we also recognize the broader reality: health outcomes are shaped by social determinants, structural inequities, and human rights. That is why this convening is more than a conference—it is a shared space to exchange best practices, sharpen strategies, and strengthen community-led solutions.

NAESM also honors the deep ties between Black gay, bisexual, and same-gender-loving communities and the Black transgender community. We remain intentional about elevating programming and advocacy that supports trans communities and addresses the specific barriers they face across healthcare and beyond.

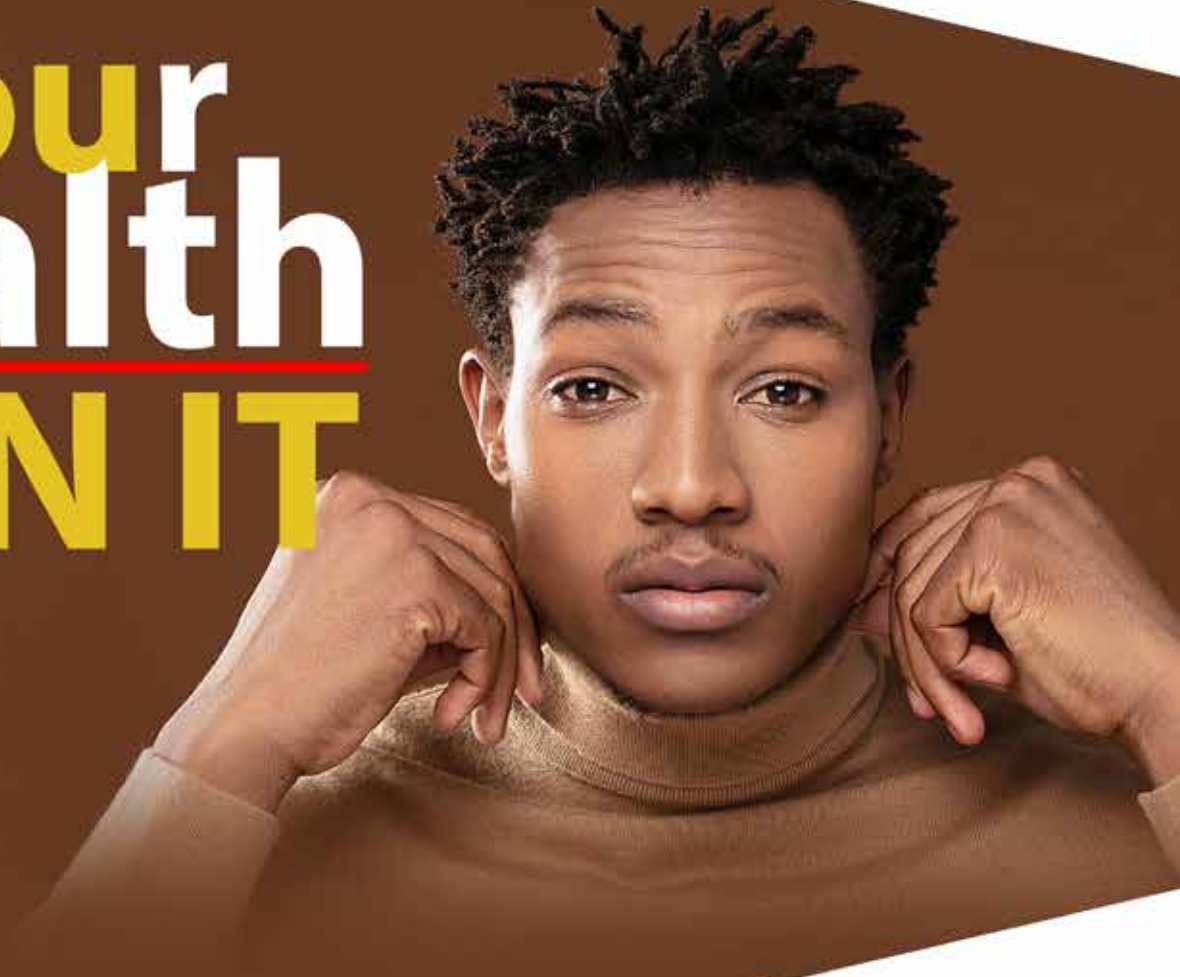
My hope is that you leave this experience feeling connected and equipped—carrying new tools, renewed energy, and relationships that extend far beyond these days together. Thank you for showing up, for bringing your leadership and lived experience, and for helping create a space where people feel seen, supported, and empowered.

With warmth and gratitude,

John Patton
Chief Executive Officer, NAESM, Inc.
On behalf of the NAESM Board of Directors



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The Men's Health and Wellness Center continually strives to reduce health disparities by providing an inclusive environment that offers high quality medical services to men regardless of their sexual orientation.

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Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, transgender or nonbinary people with certain risk factors are among those at **highest risk for mpox**

3 out of 4 at-risk individuals are unvaccinated or have not completed the **2-dose series**



Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if mpox vaccination is right for you

Learn more at EmpoweredAgainstMpox.com



Alvan George Vincent Quamina, Ph.D.
September 25, 1962 - October 19, 2025

We Remember, We Will Never Forget....

"A man of vision., A leader with compassion, A legacy that lives on."

Dr. Quamina, was a brilliant mind and leader, a humble heart, a life dedicated to serving the Black gay, bisexual, and same-gender loving men and the wider LGBTQ+ community, and nation-building through NAESM, Inc., and the CRIBB Fellowship Program.

Your inspirational legacy lives on in the lives you touched and the future you helped build.

NAESM, Inc. will always remember.

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HISTORI

HIV IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE
TO OPTIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

“COMMUNITY AS CAPITAL, IMPACT AS RETURN”

HISTORI aims to help Black communities in the United States end the HIV epidemic by providing an inclusive, self-determined platform for Black investigators to connect, learn and engage in collective advocacy.

TOGETHER WE CAN END THE EPIDEMIC



For more information scan the QR Code or visit:
<https://cira.yale.edu/implementationsscience/histori>



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

 WashU Arts & Sciences
African and African American Studies



We Love You, Love Yourself, BE HEALTHY



Moderator:

Dr. Marlon M. Bailey, Ph.D., MFA

NAESM Board Chair, NAESM, Inc.

Professor and Associate Chair, Department of African and American Studies

Professor, Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Affiliate Faculty, Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity, and

Equity (CRE2) Washington University, St. Louis



Panelist:

Jonathan Joseph

Manager, HIV Prevention & Outreach
Office of HIV Prevention and Care
Alabama Department of Health



Panelist:

Marco Mays

Founder & CEO, Live Like An Icon
Founder, The Black Cave



Panelist:

Tavaras Koonce (he/him)

Programming & Development Director
Montgomery Pride United

Thursday, May 28, 2026 | Room: Exhibit A
(Lobby Level Convention Side)

6:30pm - 8:00pm

Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa at the Convention Center Montgomery, AL 36104



Creating Responsible Intelligent Black Brothers (C.R.I.B.B.) Fellowship is a yearlong leadership development course for Black gay men who are ages 19 to 30 and who are actively involved in HIV/AIDS, or other health disparities or social justice issues that affect black gay men. The purpose of this fellowship is to provide leadership training and mentoring support that will strengthen C.R.I.B.B. Fellows' capacity to contribute to local and national efforts to reduce HIV/AIDS, other health disparities and social injustices impacting Black communities.

Fellowship Eligibility:
Must identify as a Black gay, bisexual or transgender male between the ages of 19 to 30. Must have video conference capability and reliable internet access.



naesminc.org



CRIBB Fellowship PROGRAM INCOMING Class 2027



Davontre Snoddy



DeAndre Malcolm



Eric Rattray



Glynn Ivory



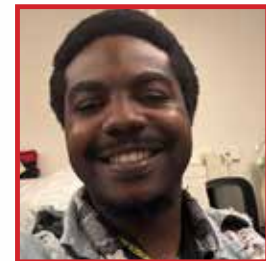
Joseph Lacy



Malik Henry



Mictrelle Cade



Ramirez Brown



Roderick Towns



Stephen Williamston



Vernell Jones



Tyree Bayan



De'Andre S. Pickett, Ed., Ph.D
CRIBB Program Manager





CRIBB Fellowship PROGRAM GRADUATING Class 2026



Ambioris Bautista-Garcia



Be-Jou'n Lyles



Bijon Barnes



Darren Daniels



Derrick Webb



Francisco Caro



Garrett Mason



Jermany Gray



Jordan Freeman



Kavarious Finch



Lee Buncum



Myles Chapman



Dempress Gasque
CRIBB Program Manager



ONE AGENCY FOUR SERVICE LOCATIONS

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MARIETTA



CLAYTON



DULUTH

DECATUR



HIV Primary Care | HIV Testing | Emotional Wellness | Recovery | Oral Health
PrEP/PEP/DoxyPEP | Pharmacy | Case Management | Nutrition Support
Condom Distribution | STI/STD Screenings | Insurance Navigation

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Connect?



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HEALTH CENTERS**
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Need
Services?



LEGEND AWARDS



LaRon Nelson



Michelle Allen



Steven Sawyer



Daniel D Driffin



Miguel Bujanda



Dewayne Crowder

Saturday, May 30, 2026

Room: Alabama AB | 7:00pm to 10:00pm

Renaissance Montgomery Hotel & Spa at the Convention Center, Montgomery, AL 36104

NAESM NATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
ON HEALTH DISPARITIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Program Schedule

(Badges and appropriate wristbands must be worn at all times)

WEDNESDAY, May 27, 2026

8:00am - 8:55am | BREAKFAST - CRIBB

Location: Riverview 4 | 2nd Floor

9:00am - 12:25pm | Morning Session - CRIBB

De'Andre S. Pickett, Ed.D., Ph.D., CRIBB Program Manager, NAESM, Inc.

Location: Riverview 2 | 2nd Floor

12:30pm - 1:59pm | LUNCH - CRIBB

Location: Riverview 4 | 2nd Floor

2:00pm - 5:30pm | Afternoon Session - CRIBB

De'Andre S. Pickett, Ed.D., Ph.D., CRIBB Program Manager, NAESM, Inc.

Location: Riverview 2 | 2nd Floor

6:00pm - 9:00pm | Exhibit Move In

Location: Alabama D | Lobby Floor

THURSDAY, May 28, 2026

9:00am - 12:00pm | Exhibit Move In

Location: Alabama D | Lobby Floor

8:00am - 5:00pm | NAESM Registration

Hotel Registration Booth | Lobby Level | Krischele Brown

8:00am - 4:00pm | Speaker Ready Room | Thurs, Fri, Sat

Huview Productions (Audio-visual for Presenters)

Location: Riverview 8 | 2nd Floor

8:00am - 8:55am | BREAKFAST - CRIBB

Location: Riverview 4 | 2nd Floor

9:00am - 12:00pm | Morning Session - CRIBB

De'Andre S. Pickett, Ed.D., Ph.D., CRIBB Program Manager, NAESM, Inc.

Location: Riverview 2 | 2nd Floor

12:30pm - 1:59pm | Lunch - CRIBB

Location: Alabama AB | Lobby Level

2:30pm - 5:30pm | Afternoon Session - CRIBB

De'Andre S. Pickett, Ed.D., Ph.D., CRIBB Program Manager, NAESM, Inc.

Location: Riverview 2 | 2nd Floor

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

INSTITUTE I | Location: Riverview 1 | 2nd Floor

PHASE: Creating Human-Centered, Community-Responsive HIV Care

Presenter(s): Jonathan Paul Lucas, PhD, MPH, Director of Research, FHI360
Caleb Brown, MPH, MHA, CHES, Research Associate, Yale School of Nursing - HPTN096 Study

Perry Rhodes III, Coalition Manager, HPTN 096 Initiatives and PhD Candidate

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

INSTITUTE II | Location: Riverview 3 | 2nd Floor

Examining How Trauma, Religious Trauma, Stigma, and Shame Impact Spirituality, Health, and HIV Prevention

Presenter(s): Rev. Dr. Tommie Watkins, Jr., LMSW
General Manager, The Watkins Group, LLC

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

INSTITUTE III | Location: Riverview 5 | 2nd Floor

The Impulse Engage Support Connect (ESC) Model: Elevating Social Advocacy, Addressing Mental Health, and Advancing the Sexual Health Care Continuum for Gay Men Globally

Presenter(s): Jammie M. Hopkins, DrPH, MS, MSCR Assistant Professor, Department of Community Health & Preventive Medicine Morehouse School of Medicine.

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

CONVERSATION SERIES | Location: Riverview 7 | 2nd Floor

Deep In The Cave This gathering will convene community members, creatives, and thought leaders for guided conversations exploring identity, storytelling, and belonging. Through honest, in-depth dialogue, participants will play an active role in shaping the future programming and initiatives of The Black Cave. The event is designed to foster meaningful connection and community among Same Gender Loving Men of Color, ages 18 and older, within the Montgomery River Region.

Moderator(s): Glynnis Young, PSY.M, LPC, NCC
Psychotherapist, Avondale and Associates Psychological Services
Marco Mays, Founder, The Black Cave

12:00pm - 2:00pm | LUNCH

Alabama AB | Lobby Level

(for all conference attendees)

2:00pm - 3:30pm | Official Exhibit Opening By NAESM Prevention Alabama D | Lobby Level

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

WORKSHOP I | Location: Riverview 3 | 2nd Floor

Black Girl Power: How the Voices of Black Trans Women Can Change Policy

Presenter(s): Jordan Braxton, Community Empowerment Manager, Vivent Health

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Workshop II | Location: Riverview 4 | 2nd Floor

My Sister's Keeper

Presenter(s): Gerald Garth, MBA, Executive Director, AMAAD Institute

Diamond Paulk, TGI Program Manager, AMAAD Institute

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Workshop III | Location: Riverview 5 | 2nd Floor

Strutting for our Healing – Transformative power of Ballroom for Black Queer Folk

Presenter(s): Gillette Harris, Program Coordinator, Us Helping Us People Into Living

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Workshop IV | Location: Riverview 7 | 2nd Floor

From Stigma to Strategy Using Community Conversations to Advance Sexual Health and HIV Prevention | Black LGBTQ+ Communities

Presenter(s): Ashley N. Browning, MRC, CNP

Self-Care Strategist & Community Wellness Educator, She Selfish

6:00pm - 8:30pm | CRIBB Final Gathering

Location: Riverview 1 | 2nd Floor

Dempris Gasque, CRIBB Program Manager, NAESM, Inc.

6:30pm - 8:00pm | Community Conversations,

Title: Bridges, Not Barriers: Creating a Path to Equity, Access, and Justice.

Location: Exhibit A | 1st Floor Convention Center

Co-Sponsored by: Department of African and African Studies at WashU and Empowered Against MPox

Moderator(s): Dr. Marlon M. Bailey, Ph.D., MFA, NAESM Board Chair, NAESM, Inc.

Professor and Associate Chair, Department of African and American Studies

Professor, Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Affiliate Faculty, Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity, and Equity (CRE2)

Washington University, St. Louis

Panelist(s): Marco Mays, Founder & CEO, Live Like An Icon, Founder, The Black Cave

Tavaras Koonce, Programming & Development Director, Montgomery

Pride United

Jonathan Joseph, Manager, HIV Prevention & Outreach, Office of HIV Prevention

and Care, Alabama Department of Health

8:00pm - 10:00pm | NAESM CONFERENCE OPENING RECEPTION

Starlight Foyer | 2nd Floor, Convention Side

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2026

8:00am - 8:59am | NAESM Registration Hotel Registration Booth, Lobby Level | Krischele Brown

8:50 am - 8:59 am

SESSION I | Location: ALABAMA AB | Lobby Level

Welcome Remarks

Presenter(s): John D. Patton, Interim Executive Director & CEO, NAESM, Inc.

9:00 am - 10:30 am

BREAKFAST | PLENARY I | Location: ALABAMA AB | Lobby Level

NAESM PrEP University Powered by NAESM, Inc.

This dynamic, high-energy, community-centered event is designed to bring people together in a positive and motivating environment focused on HIV testing and prevention. Blending education with engagement, NAESM PrEP University creates an accessible and affirming space where attendees can learn, connect, and take action toward better health outcomes.

Host(s): Treasure Aiko, Prevention Manger, NAESM, Inc.

Dempris Gasque, Program Manager, NAESM, Inc.

10:45am - 12:15pm | Session II

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

WORKSHOP V | Location: Riverview 1 | 2nd Floor

Carceral Linkage to Care

Presenter(s): Chad Zawitz, MD, Senior Director, US Medical Affairs, Gilead Sciences

Alean Bryant, PharmD, AAHIVP, Senior Medical Science Liaison, Gilead Sciences

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

WORKSHOP VI | Location: Riverview 2 | 2nd Floor

Bridges Not Barriers: Kings of Tomorrow as a Syndemic Model for Health Equity in St. Louis

Presenter(s): Jordan Cox, Peer Navigator, Williams & Associates, Inc.

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

WORKSHOP VII | Location: Riverview 3 | 2nd Floor

Do they really want to end the Epidemic

Presenter(s): Morris Singletary, Executive Director, The PozItive2positive Initiative

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

WORKSHOP VIII | Location: Riverview 4 | 2nd Floor

Digital Bridges to Equity: Community-Led mHealth as a Pathway to Health for Black Same Gender Loving Men in the South

Presenter(s): Justin Smith, MS, MPH, Director, Campaign to End AIDS, Positive Impact Health Centers

Devin English, PhD., Associate Professor, Rutgers School of Public Health

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

WORKSHOP IX | Location: Riverview 5 | 2nd Floor

When the Date Doesn't Tell the Whole Story: Class, Representation and HIV Research Among Black Gay Men

Presenter(s): Dontá Morrison, PhD., Director of Community Outreach and Engagement, UCLA Care Center

Kyle Gordon, MHA, Project Manager | External Affairs, HIV Vaccines Trials Network, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center

12:30pm - 2:00pm | Session III

12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

LUNCH | PLENARY II | Location: Alabama AB | Lobby Level

Bridging the Intergenerational Divide with Grace and Dignity: A Discussion on the Impacts of Misalignment in Professional Spaces with Generational Clashes

Moderator(s): Dr. Alexis Gibson, EdD, Educational Leadership for Social Justice

Panelist(s): Kysi Collins, BS, Holistic Coach, CompasScope

Tiiwon Siaway, BS, Arts Educator, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

Madison Bailey, Head of Planning, COLORS

Jamillah Bell, MA, Marketing Administrative Coordinator, WVAS 90.7 FM

Tony Walker Billups, BS, HIV Advocate, Author of "Walking in Truth"

2:15pm - 3:45pm | Session IV

2:15 pm - 3:45 pm

WORKSHOP X | Location: Riverview 1 | 2nd Floor

Amplifying Community Voices in HIV Care & Support Services: The Making of a Client Advisory Board (CAB)

Presenter(s): Darren Wright, Patient Navigator, Engagement Coordinator, Positive Impact Health Centers

Sharon Kricun, Adherence & Retention Manager, Positive Impact Health Centers

2:15 pm - 3:45 pm

WORKSHOP XI | Location: Riverview 2 | 2nd Floor

Community Based Participatory Action Research: When Community Members Lead Research

Presenter(s): Obie McNair, PhD, Sr. Manager for Community Health Research, BlaqOut, Inc.

2:15 pm - 3:45 pm

WORKSHOP XII | Location: Riverview 3 | 2nd Floor

How Pharmacists Are Helping Bridge the Gap in PrEP Care and Continuity

Presenter(s): Erika Bowens, PharmD, BS, AAHIVP, CPh, Pharmacist-in-Charge, Avita Pharmacy Montgomery

2:15 pm - 3:45 pm

WORKSHOP XIII | Location: Riverview 4 | 2nd Floor

Turning Training into Access: Expanding Community Mental Health Through Strategic Counseling Internship integration

Presenter(s): Justyn Smith, PhD., LPC-Supervisor, Impulse Group Houston Mental Health Specialty Resources & Projects

Jammie M. Hopkins, DrPH, MS, MSCR, Assistant Professor, Department of Community Health & Preventive Medicine, Morehouse School of Medicine

2:15 pm - 3:45 pm

WORKSHOP XIV | Location: Riverview 5 | 2nd Floor

Sacred Creativity: Black Queer Aesthetics as HIV Advocacy tool in the Age of Christian Nationalism

Presenter(s): Bishar Jenkins Jr., MPP, MA in Political Science, Senior Manager of Government Relations, AIDS United

Joseph White, Community Organizer, AIDS United

2:15 pm - 3:45 pm

WORKSHOP XV | Location: Riverview 6 | 2nd Floor

Queering the Clinic: Exploring the Critical Queering of Sexual Health Service Work in QTBIPOC Communities with REACHLA

Presenter(s): Bijon Justin Barnes, Engagement Specialist, REACHLA

4:00pm - 4:30pm | **Session V** | **POSTER PRESENTATIONS**

4:00 pm - 4:30 pm

POSTER I | **Location:** Alabama D | Lobby Level

Still Deserving of Touch: Platonic Connection, Coping, and Healing Among Black Same-Gender Loving Men

Presenter(s): DeKeitra R. Griffin, MSW, MPA, LCSW, PhD Student, School of Social Work, Louisiana State University

Odessa J. Foster, M.S., Ph.D. Student, School of Social Work, Louisiana State University

4:00 pm - 4:30 pm

POSTER II | **Location:** Alabama D | Lobby Level

Housing Stability as Treatment Infrastructure

Presenter(s): Rahem White, Program Director, Arkansas RAPPs

4:00 pm - 4:30 pm

POSTER III | **Location:** Alabama D | Lobby Level

Rooms With No Doors: Visual Storytelling on Home, Belonging, and Mental Health Among Black LGBTQ+ Young Adults

Presenter(s): Kavarious Finch, BS, Visual Artist and Community Health Advocate, C.R.I.B.B.

4:00 pm - 4:30 pm

POSTER IV | **Location:** Alabama D | Lobby Level

Medical Mistrust, HIV-Related Stigma, and PrEP Uptake Among Individuals Recently Diagnosed with HIV: A Conceptual Framework

Presenter(s): Darius Rush, MSN, RN, PhD(c), Augusta University

4:00 pm - 4:30 pm

POSTER V | **Location:** Alabama D | Lobby Level

HIV Viewpoints: Survey on the Treatment Experiences of People Living with HIV in Canada, Mexico, and the United States

Presenter(s): Alean Bryant, Pharm.D., AAHIVP, Sr. Medical Science Liaison, Gilead Sciences

4:30pm - 5:00pm | **SOCIAL HAPPY HOUR**

Alabama D | Lobby Level

CRIBB – Graduation Dinner

6:00pm - 8:00pm | Alabama AB | Lobby Level

Dempris Gasque, CRIBB Program Manager, NAESM, Inc.

8:00 pm - 9:30 pm | **SPONSORS RECEPTION**

Location: PS | Private Function

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2026

6:00 am - 7:30 am **HIGH IMPACT AEROBICS SESSION** |

Location: Exhibit B | Lobby Level

Instructor(s): Sylver Rochelin, Instructor, Froca Fitness

9:00am - 10:30am | Session VI

9:00 am - 10:30 am

BREAKFAST | PLENARY III | Location: Alabama AB | Lobby Level

Navigating Love, Identity, and Mental Health Join Martez Smith, Calvin Leveille, and Antar Bush for a deeply personal breakfast plenary exploring the vital links between mental health, love, and interpersonal relationships. This interactive session moves beyond the surface to examine how emotional intimacy and vulnerability serve as foundations for both personal healing and community leadership. By dismantling the barriers within our own identities and connections, we can build stronger bridges toward equity and social justice. Expect a transformative experience that challenges you to lead—and love—more compassionately. Searching for John Doe Podcast

Podcaster(s): Martez D. R. Smith, PhD, LMSW, Public health scholar, licensed social worker, and community-engaged researcher

Kalvin Leveille, MHA, MHC-LP, Public health leader and HIV/AIDS advocate

Antar T. Bush, LMSW, MPH, CHES, Seasoned expert in public health communications, a creative storyteller, advocate, and cultural commentator

10:45am - 12:15pm | Session VII

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

WORKSHOP XVI | Location: Riverview 1 | 2nd Floor

Southern Tea: Community Voices Shaping HIV Solutions Across Georgia

Presenter(s): Daniel D. Driffin, DrPH, MPH, Project Manager | External Affairs, HIV Vaccines Trials Network, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center

Leisha McKinley-Beach, Founder & CEO, Black Public Health Academy

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

WORKSHOP XVII | Location: Riverview 2 | 2nd Floor

Undetectable but Visible: HIV Disclosure, Reality TV, and Social Media Conversation

Presenter(s): Maliek Yuseef Powell, Community Advocate & Media Storyteller
M.I.B. Production House, Independent HIV Advocate

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

WORKSHOP XVIII | Location: Riverview 3 | 2nd Floor

Ensuring Space for Spirituality in Direct Community Care Interventions

Presenter(s): Nathaniel Currie, DSW, MSW, LCSW, Psychotherapist, NAESM, Inc.
Malachi Walker, Community Health Coordinator, NAESM, Inc.

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

WORKSHOP XIX | Location: Riverview 4 | 2nd Floor

Tapestry

Presenter(s): Lorenzo Robertson, Executive Director, Ujima Men's Collective
Ederick Johnson, Program Coordinator, Ujima Men's Collective

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

WORKSHOP XX | Location: Riverview 5 | 2nd Floor

The Digital Frontline: Leveraging Podcasts as Catalyst for HIV Prevention and Health Equity among Black Gay Men

Presenter(s): Jai The Gentlemen, Host/Executive Producer, Dear Black Gay Men Podcast

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

WORKSHOP XXI | Location: Riverview 6 | 2nd Floor

Good Intentions Are Not Enough: Examining Service Provider Preparedness to Support Black Same-Gender Loving Men

Presenter(s): Jason M. Dotson, MHD, MHS, LPC, LCADC, ACS, Ph.D. Candidate, Fielding Graduate University

Alfred L. Forbes, MBA, Advocate & International Consultant, Forbes, LLC.

12:30pm - 2:00pm | **Session VIII**

12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

LUNCH | PLENARY IV | Location: Alabama AB | Lobby Level

Hanging out with Mr. P.....

Presenter(s): Dr. Daniel Black, Ph.D., Author, Professor, Consultant, Mentor
John D. Patton, Interim Executive Director & CEO, NAESM, Inc.

2:15pm - 3:45pm | **Session IX**

2:15 pm - 3:45 pm

WORKSHOP XXII | Location: Riverview 1 | 2nd Floor

Somatic Liberation: Pleasure Mapping using Kink and Trauma Informed Frameworks to Address Shame in Black LGBTQ+ Sexual Health

Presenter(s): AK Reese, MSW, CPS-MH, NAESM, Inc.

2:15 pm - 3:45 pm

WORKSHOP XXIII | Location: Riverview 2 | 2nd Floor

Healing Through Memory: Honoring Forty Years of Joseph Beam's In the Life

Presenter(s): Johnnie Kornegay, Deputy Director for Strategy and Impact, Counter Narrative Project

Charles Stephens, Executive Director, Counter Narrative Project

Thandiwe DeShazor, Program Manager, Counter Narrative Project

2:15 pm - 3:45 pm

WORKSHOP XXIV | Location: Riverview 3 | 2nd Floor

The New Outreach Workers: Partnering with Black Queer Influencers to Advance Sexual Health Equity

Presenter(s): David Brandyn, Sex Educator, Content Creator, Butch Queen

2:15 pm - 3:45 pm

WORKSHOP XV | Location: Riverview 5 | 2nd Floor

Reflect & Reveal Part II: How Photovoice can Illustrate Change in SGL Black Men's Sexual Health Outcomes

Presenter(s): John G. Rowell Jr., MPH, Associate Director of Prevention Alliance of AIDS Services-Carolina

3:45pm - 5:00pm | **Exhibits**

Alabama D | Lobby Level

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Legends Awards Black Tie Gala | Location: Alabama AB | Lobby Level

Hostess: Miss Sophia

Legends Honorees:

Michelle L. Allen, Miguel Bujanda, Dr. Daniel Driffin, Dr. LaRon Nelson, Steven Sawyer, Dewayne Crowder

Entertainers – Star of the Century: Niesha Dupree, Necole Luv Dupree Stasha Sanchez, April Chanel, Chavon Scott, Vita VonTesse

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2024

Departure

A portrait of a woman with long, wavy, light-colored hair, wearing a white top with a blue and black feathered collar. The background is a dark blue, geometric pattern.

MISS,
Sophia

NAESM CONFERENCE HOSTESS

Saturday, May 30th, 2026

7:00pm - 10:00pm

Alabama AB (Lobby Floor)



STARS OF THE CENTURY

Legends Award Black-Tie Gala



MISS BLACK UNIVERSE
April Chanel



MISS BLACK AMERICA
Chavon Scott



THE WHITNEY
Necole Luw Dupree



THE EMPRESS
Niesha Dupree



THE COACH GIRL
Stasha Sanchez



RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE
Vita Von Tesse



HOSTED BY:
Miss Sophia

RENAISSANCE MONTGOMERY
HOTEL & SPA

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2026

TIME: 7:00PM - 10:00PM
ROOM: ALABAMA AB (LOBBY FLOOR)

Presenters



John D Patton

Interim Executive Director & CEO, NAESM, Inc.

John Patton is a visionary executive with over 20 years of experience driving strategic partnerships, organizational growth, and mission-aligned initiatives across healthcare, financial services, and corporate sectors. Renowned for advancing inclusion-centered leadership, John has built a career transforming organizations through strategy, governance, and people development.



Jonathan Paul Lucas, PhD, MPH,

Director of Research, FHI360

Jonathan Paul Lucas, PhD, MPH, is a public health educationalist with community engagement experience that spans more than three decades. He has a strong theoretical background in public health with practical experience in academic, community, and clinical settings, where he focuses on providing patient education, community capacity building, public health advocacy, and clinical research management. A focus on infectious disease prevention and treatment has been a central component throughout his professional career, particularly with underserved populations, including people with marginalized orientations in North and South America, people who inject drugs in Asia, and young women in East and Southern Africa.



Caleb Brown, MPH, MHA, CHES

Research Associate, Yale School of Nursing - HPTN096 Study

Caleb Brown, MPH, MHA, is a public health professional and Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) candidate with extensive experience in HIV prevention, community engagement, and health education. He has worked with academic and community-based organizations to design and implement culturally responsive interventions, facilitate workforce training, and support program implementation that improves health outcomes among underserved populations. Caleb's work focuses on reducing stigma, advancing health equity, and strengthening community-centered approaches to care.



Perry Rhodes III

Coalition Manager, HPTN 096 Initiatives and PhD Candidate

Perry Rhodes III is a public health strategist, researcher, and coalition builder dedicated to advancing health equity, particularly in the context of HIV prevention among Black communities in the Southern United States. As the founder of PR3Creativity, Perry leads innovative initiatives that integrate community engagement, strategic planning, and culturally grounded communication to improve health outcomes and strengthen systems of care.



Rev. Dr. Tommie Watkins, Jr., LMSW

General Manager, The Watkins Group, LLC

The Rev. Dr. Tommie Lee Watkins Jr. is a Behavioral Health Social Worker who graduated from the University of Alabama School of Social Work in May 2009 and was licensed as an LMSW in August of the same year. He also is a spiritual director, spiritual counselor, and licensed multi-engine rated commercial pilot. Dr. Watkins completed his joint Doctorate in Philosophy degree from the Universities of Alabama, Tuscaloosa and University of Alabama, Birmingham, School of Public Health in August 2013. Rev. Dr. Watkins graduated from The General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church, New York City in May 2016 Cum Laude with his Master of Divinity (M.Div) degree.



Jammie M. Hopkins, DrPH, MS, MSCR

Assistant Professor, Department of Community Health & Preventive Medicine, Morehouse School of Medicine

Dr. Jammie Hopkins is committed to operating at the intersections of research, policy, and practice to promote healthy lifestyles and eliminate chronic disease health disparities among vulnerable populations. He is Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Health and Preventive Medicine at Morehouse School of Medicine. Dr. Hopkins also serves on Global Governance Board for Impulse United, and is a member of the Board of Directors for AIDS Healthcare Foundation, the largest HIV/AIDS non-profit care organization in the world.

Presenters



Marco Mays

Founder & CEO, Live Like An Icon, Founder, The Black Cave

Marco Mays is a Black, gay, Southern Alabama born artist, advocate, humanitarian, empowerment speaker, author, and model that uses multiple mediums to express himself in his works to focus on the acts of self-love and self-reflections. When Marco is not dabbling in the arts of life affirmations, he is an Advocate for the LGBTQ+ community with a focus on the betterment of the Black Same Gender-Loving Male. He is the founder and CEO of Live Like An Icon, a consulting company specializing in personal development and events management, and the founder of The Black Cave, a peer-led group of Black Same Gender-Loving Males dedicated to bettering the community.



Glynnis Young, PSY.M, LPC, NCC

Psychotherapist, Avondale and Associates Psychological Services

Glynnis Young, a passionate servant leader in the mental health industry, has committed her life's work to instilling resiliency in others and empowering individuals to make positive transformations in their lives. Her decorated 24-year career in the United States Air Force, intertwined with her intense study in the field of Psychology, has equipped her with a deep understanding and compassion for those affected by trauma.



Jordan Braxton

Community Empowerment Manager, Vivent Health

Jordan Braxton has been an Activist in the St. Louis LGBTQIA+ community for almost 40-years, raising awareness about HIV/AIDS and Trans Rights. Jordan is on the Board of Pride St. Louis, Inc. as The Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach and the Vice President of St. Louis Black Pride and TransParent. Jordan is also the Chair of the City of St. Louis Mayor's LGBTQIA+ Advisory Board. Jordan has been a member of the Metro St. Louis HIV Health Services Planning Council for 5 years and serves as Co-chair of the Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI) Committee.



Gerald Garth, MBA

Executive Director, AMAAD Institute

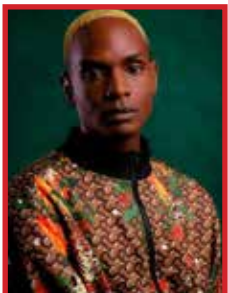
Gerald Garth, MBA serves as Executive Director of the AMAAD (Arming Minorities Against Addiction & Disease) Institute, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Black communities through programs grounded in health, housing, and hope. Garth leads a multidisciplinary team delivering culturally responsive services that address health prevention, care navigation, mental health, substance use, faith and spirituality, and housing access, particularly for communities disproportionately impacted by HIV.



Diamond X Paulk

TGI Program Manager, AMAAD Institute

Diamond Xavier is a dynamic artist, spiritual leader, and community advocate originally from Jacksonville, Florida, now based in Los Angeles, California. She serves as the first TGI (Transgender, Gender Expansive, and Intersex) Program Coordinator at the AMAAD Institute, where she leads a transitional home for trans-feminine individuals with a focus on healing and empowerment. Diamond is also the Co-Chair of the Transgender Caucus with the Los Angeles Commission on HIV, helping to shape inclusive policies and amplify trans voices in public health.



Gillette Harris

Program Coordinator, Us Helping Us People Into Living

Gillette Oricci is a world-renowned runway authority, international model, and dedicated advocate whose career is defined by the intersection of high-fashion artistry and community service. Originally from North Carolina, Gillette has spent over a decade translating the rich traditions of the underground Ballroom scene into a global educational platform. Since 2014, they have served as a premier International Runway Instructor, conducting masterclasses that span the globe from Paris, London, and Berlin to Moscow and India. Gillette's expertise is rooted in fifteen years of immersion within the Ballroom community—a culture dating back to the 1960s that honors the creativity of queer people of color. Within this space, Gillette was deemed Legendary for their mastery of the European Runway category. As a Co-Founder of the House of Nina Oricci, Gillette helped bring this competitive excellence to a mainstream audience during the house's debut on Season 2 of HBO Max's *Legendary*.

Presenters



Sharon Kricun

Adherence Retention Manager, at PIHC

Sharon Kricun is an Adherence Retention Manager at PIHC and steers the adherence /retention support programs and services. These programs are integral to patient care, including but not limited to transportation, patient navigation and community health work. Sharon is passionate regarding patient empowerment, health equity and reducing stigma within the HIV Community. Sharon worked in the HIV Field in the early 1980s witnessing the devastating impact HIV and also worked in Women's Health for over 10 years and educated women in safe sexual practices, which lead her to her current career. Sharon is devoted to her partner Sam and 2 children and loves to travel. Fun Fact: Sharon has watched General Hospital for over 49 years.



Ashley M. Browning, MRC, CNP

Self-Care Strategist & Community Wellness Educator, She Selfish

Ashley N. Browning is a self-care strategist, sexual health educator, national speaker, and community advocate dedicated to advancing holistic wellness, healing, and health equity. She is the founder of The SoLoved Collective, a 501(c)(3) ecosystem focused on health, education, and social justice. As a queer Black woman, Ashley brings both lived experience and professional expertise to her work.



Dr. Marlon Bailey, PH.D, MFA

Board Chair, NAESM, Inc., Professor and Associate Chair, Department of African and American Studies, Wash U

Marlon M. Bailey is a Black queer theorist and critical/performance ethnographer who studies Black LGBTQ cultural formations, sexual health, and HIV/AIDS prevention. He has served as the Benedict Distinguished Visiting Professor in Africana Studies at Carleton College; the Distinguished Weinberg Fellow in the Department of African American Studies at Northwestern University, and a Visiting Professor at the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS) in the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco.



Tavaras Koonce

Programming & Development Director, Montgomery Pride United

Tavaras Koonce is a nonprofit organizer and community advocate based in Montgomery, Alabama. He currently serves as the Programming & Development Director for Montgomery Pride United, where he leads the development of community-centered programs, manages program budgets, and cultivates strategic partnerships that expand engagement and support for LGBTQ+ initiatives.



Jonathan Joseph

Manager, HIV Prevention & Outreach, Office of HIV Prevention and Care, Alabama Department of Health

Jonathan Joseph is the Manager of HIV Prevention and Outreach with the Office of HIV Prevention and Care, of Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH). He has worked with the department for a little over five years. In his current role, he is responsible for the coordination of HIV prevention activities in collaboration with AIDS Service Organizations and other community partners to reduce the number of new HIV infections in the state.



Treasure Aiko

Prevention Manager, NAESM, Inc.

(she/her/hers) is a lifetime learner, strategic-leader, visionary, and disruptor within the field of Infectious Disease. Currently within the Office of Infectious Disease and HIV/AIDS Policy (OIDP), she serves as a Health Equity Specialist Lead and Black Women's Initiative co-lead. Dr. Robinson oversees development and coordination of health equity promotion among teams including vaccines and immunization, blood and tissue safety and availability, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, sexually transmitted infections, antimicrobial resistance, and OIDP's federal advisory committees. Her directive is to gain understanding and address health disparities among the underserved, racial, ethnic minority, and rural communities surrounding diversity, equity, inclusion, accountability, accessibility and belonging.

Presenters



Dempris Gasque

CRIBB Program Manager, NAESM, Inc.

Dempris Gasque is a results-driven Program Manager with expertise in community engagement, program development, and leadership within nonprofit and corporate settings. Passionate about advancing equity and professional growth, Dempris has led impactful initiatives focused on participant engagement, strategic partnerships, and grant-funded program compliance. Dempris brings a collaborative, innovative, and solutions-focused approach to fostering inclusive communities and sustainable organizational impact.



Chad Zawitz, MD

Senior Director, US Medical Affairs, Gilead Sciences, Inc.

Chad Zawitz, MD is a Senior Director of US Medical Affairs at Gilead Sciences. As a Regional Medical Expert, Dr. Zawitz is committed to expanding medical education and research initiatives to improve the outcomes for people who want and need HIV prevention and those living with HIV. Prior to joining Gilead, Chad was the Divisional Chair of Correctional Health and a practicing Infectious Diseases physician at the Cook County Jail, with privileges at the Ruth Rothstein CORE Center and John. H. Stroger Hospital in Chicago for 21 years.



Alesan Bryant, PharmD, AAHIVP

Senior Medical Science Liaison, Gilead Sciences, Inc.

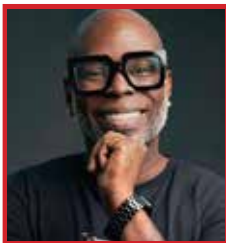
Dr. Alesan Bryant is a dynamic clinician, health equity advocate, and creative professional whose work sits at the intersection of science, equity, and authentic human connection. As a Senior Medical Science Liaison at Gilead Sciences, he leads HIV treatment and prevention initiatives across the Southeastern US. His early impact in Medical Affairs was recognized with Gilead's Alvan Fisher MSL Rookie of the Year award.



Jordan Cox

Peer Navigator, Williams & Associates, Inc.

Jordan Cox is a community health worker and Peer Navigator at Williams and Associates with over eight years of experience in community outreach, HIV prevention, and client advocacy. As a Peer Navigator for the Kings of Tomorrow program, he works closely with Black men impacted by substance use and mental health challenges, providing trauma-informed, culturally responsive support and helping individuals navigate care, rebuild trust, and move toward stability.



Morris Singletary

Executive Director, The PozItive2positive Initiative

Morris Singletary is a public health and education-focused consultant who is committed to advancing health equity, strengthening community voice, and improving access to care. We specialize in culturally responsive engagement strategies that empower individuals—particularly those living with HIV—to live informed, healthy, and stigma-free lives.



Justin Smith, MS, MPH

Director, Campaign to End AIDS, Positive Impact Health Centers

Justin is a Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) student at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and has spent his career developing community-driven strategies to address the HIV epidemic and improve LGBTQI+ population health. He is also the Director of the Campaign to End AIDS at Positive Impact Health Centers in Atlanta, GA, where he leads stakeholder engagement for the development and implementation of the Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) strategy for Metro Atlanta and serves as the principal investigator for two federally-funded research initiatives.

Presenters



Devin English, PhD

Associate Professor, Rutgers School of Public Health

Dr. English is committed to reducing health inequities through understanding and combatting racism, heterosexism, and other systems of oppression. His research has primarily focused on the confronting systems that harm the health of diverse Black communities in the United States. Dr. English's current research aims to promote the psychological and HIV-related health among Black LGBTQ communities by reducing intersectional oppression through community-collaborative and policy-relevant research.



Dontá Morrison, PhD

Director of Community Outreach and Engagement, UCLA Care Center

Dr. Dontá Morrison serves as the Director of Community Outreach and Engagement at the UCLA CARE Center, where he leads inclusive, equity-centered strategies that strengthen connections between scientific research and underserved communities. His work focuses on increasing awareness of HIV research, building community trust, and ensuring that historically marginalized populations are informed, represented, and empowered to participate in studies that directly impact their health and well-being.



Kyle Gordon, MHA

Project Manager, External Affairs HIV Vaccines Trials Network, Fred Hutchinson Cance Center

Kyle Gordon is a social entrepreneur and public health strategist. With a career rooted in research, community engagement and health equity, Kyle works at the intersection of public health, social services, and infectious disease—committed to expanding access to holistic healthcare for marginalized communities. He began his journey in Los Angeles, advocating for individuals affected by communicable diseases by providing education, treatment navigation, and social support.



Dr. Alexis Gibson, EdD

Educational Leadership for Social Justice

Dr. Alexis Gibson (Dr. G) is an educator and mental health professional specializing in transformative social-emotional learning and restorative practices. She obtained her doctorate in Educational Leadership for Social Justice and published her dissertation, Badge of Honor: The Interplaying of Strong Black Woman Schema (SBWS) on Black Women's Ability to Cope with Gender- and Race-Related Stressors. Her research and professional endeavors involve working alongside individuals in marginalized communities to uplift their voices and agency, educate to empower, and ignite critical discourse around inequitable systems that impact their daily lives.



Kysi Collins, BS

Holistic Coach, CompasScope

I am a purpose-driven creative strategist and project leader who uses storytelling, multimedia, music, and community-rooted work to spark transformation, amplify unheard voices, and create a lasting impact across the globe. Coach Kysi Keyz is an Innovative Storyteller and Multi-talented Creative Artist that uses her passion for human behavior to spark transformation through visual arts and music.



Tiiwon Siaway, BS

Arts Educator, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts

Tiiwon Siaway is a creative and arts educator whose surreal artistry – Art That Really Illuminates (ATRI) – reflects a visual dialogue between the spiritual and the earthly. Their ATRI world takes shape through paintings, mixed media art, 2D animation, and a style of live, illustrative summarizing called “Graphic Notetaking.” Tiiwon currently resides in her hometown of Montgomery, Alabama, where she serves as the Manager of Adult Programs at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, and spends her free time indulging creative pursuits at her studio in downtown Montgomery.

Presenters



Madison Bailey

Head of Planning, COLORS

Madison Bailey is a lifelong community organizer and artist. She expresses her passion for safe, accessible community engagement through her work as an event facilitator with Colors United. Her organizing roots began in her grandparents' ministry, where she learned the importance of meeting people with acceptance at every stage of life, and grew through youth councils and mentorships addressing issues like substance abuse, gun violence, and food insecurity across Montgomery. She now focuses on reproductive justice and sexual health education through collaborations with organizations like the Yellowhammer Fund. Outside of her work, she is a singer, songwriter, and cook who draws inspiration from her community and the stories they share.



Jamillah Bell, MA

Marketing Administrative Coordinator, WVAS 90.7 FM

Jamillah Bell is a 28-year-old native of Montgomery, Alabama. A poet, musician, and visual artist. An interdisciplinary pocket of black magic brought to life. With degrees in history and experience teaching, his perspective is broad but focused on liberation, love, and queer joy.



Tony Walker Billups, BS

HIV Advocate, Author of "Walking in Truth"

Tony Billups is a husband, father, grandfather, uncle, and mentor of many. Tony is a long-time HIV survivor, and since beginning his work in HIV, he has always focused on stigma reduction in all its forms. Being very passionate about the plight of people living with HIV/AIDS, he feels that it is everyone's responsibility to educate themselves and others as much as possible on HIV/AIDS in order to help prevent its spread and start erasing stigma. Fighting HIV is an intersectional fight. In order to eradicate the virus, we have to fight the following: poverty, educational disparities, homophobia, bigotry, and racism.



Obie McNair, PhD

Sr. Manager for Community Health Research, BlaqOut, Inc.

Dr. Obie McNair has always had a passion for public health research. His research expertise includes health outcomes such as obesity and high blood pressure, as well as HIV/STI prevention, Black men's health, and community based participatory research methods. He has dedicated his life to examining health outcomes among Black men, specifically emphasizing African American sexual minority men.



Erika Bowens, PharmD, BS, AAHIVP, CPh

Pharmacist-in-Charge, Avita Pharmacy, Montgomery

Erika Bowens, PharmD, BS, AAHIVP, CPh, is a pharmacist and healthcare leader serving as Pharmacist-in-Charge at Avita Pharmacy's Montgomery, Alabama, location, located onsite with Five Horizons Health Services. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Tuskegee University in 2012 and her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Florida A&M University in 2016.



Justyn Smith, PhD, LPC-Supervisor

Impulse Group Houston, Mental Health Specialty Resources & Projects

Dr. Justyn Smith is a licensed professional counselor supervisor, counselor educator, and mental health consultant with over a decade of experience in clinical practice, supervision, and higher education. His clinical background includes community mental health, psychiatric hospitals, college counseling centers, and private practice. He also serves as Mental Health Resources & Projects Lead on the Global Impulse Program Team. As Founder & Principal Consultant of Smith Internship Consulting, he partners with schools, nonprofits, and community agencies to design internship and supervision systems that strengthen counselor development, meet student training needs, and expand access to care in communities facing growing mental health needs.

Presenters



Bishar Jenkins, Jr., MPP, MA in Political Science

Senior Manager of Government Relations, AIDS United

Bishar Jenkins, Jr. is a Black and queer health equity strategist, policy leader, and progressive faith-informed advocate with over seven years of experience advancing public health across multiple sectors. Bishar earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Rutgers University and a Master of Public Policy from Brandeis University. He earned a Master of Arts in Religion from Yale University, where he graduated with honors. He was a recipient of the Andover Newton Diploma and the John A. Wade Prize for greatest originality in expository preaching.



Joseph White

Community Organizer, AIDS United

Joseph White is a digital organizing strategist, storyteller, and multi-disciplinary artist whose work fuses political vision with creative force. An actor, director, playwright, and recording artist, he brings a narrative precision shaped by theatre, music, and community engagement to every project he leads. His work spans poetic drama, socially charged visual art, and lyrical music rooted in truth, conflict, and transformation. A philosophical thinker with a deep love of science, civic life, and the cosmos, he is driven by a mission to build more just, resilient systems and to tell stories that shift culture.



Bijon Justin Barnes

Engagement Specialist, REACHLA

Bijon Justin "Huey" Barnes, he/they pronouns interchangeably, is currently a Queer, Black, male bodied, public health practitioner serving in the role of Engagement Specialist at REACH LA where he primarily fulfills the single staff work of three programs (Book Club for Sissies, Guy Code, and QTPOC Connect) that all lend themselves to the holistic health of all community members and allies with an emphasis on supporting Queer people of color, and Womxn between the ages of 13-35.



DeKeitra R. Griffin, MSW, MPA, LCSW

PhD Student, School of Social Work, Louisiana State University

DeKeitra Griffin (He/King) is a PhD student at Louisiana State University and a nationally engaged advocate advancing behavioral health and HIV equity. He holds leadership roles with the Professional Association of Social Workers in HIV/AIDS, the National HIV/AIDS Housing Coalition, and the U.S. People Living with HIV Caucus. President of LSU's Association of Black Social Workers, he brings policy engagement and lived experience to his work. A survivor of multiple adversities, DeKeitra translates personal insight into advocacy that strengthens services, informs policy, and improves outcomes for marginalized communities.



Odessa J. Foster, M.S.

Ph.D. Student, School of Social Work, Louisiana State University

Odessa Foster is a third-year PhD student in Social Work at Louisiana State University. She also teaches both online and in-person courses as an adjunct instructor at Southern University. She holds a Master of Science in Child and Family Studies and a Bachelor of Arts in Family and Consumer Sciences. Her research focuses on colorism, mentoring, and academic support for Black women in graduate education, especially within predominantly White institutions. Using community-based participatory approaches and Photovoice methodology, her work aims to amplify lived experiences and promote more equitable practices in higher education and social work.



Rahem White

Program Director, Arkansas RAPPS

Rahem White is the Program Director for Arkansas RAPPS (Reaching Affirming, Positive, Progressive Systems). He leads programs focused on HIV prevention, sexual health education, and stigma reduction across Arkansas. His work centers on expanding access to PrEP, HIV testing, and supportive services for communities that face barriers to care. Rahem previously served as Operations Coordinator for the Central Arkansas Harm Reduction Project. There, he supported harm reduction initiatives for people who use drugs and individuals experiencing homelessness, helping strengthen outreach, service coordination, and community partnerships.

Presenters



Kavariious Finch, BS

Visual Artist and Community Health Advocate, C.R.I.B.B. Fellow

Kavariious Finch is a media professional and creative storyteller, holding a B.S. in Media Production and Photography from Belmont University. As the founder of The Nlle Productions, he specializes in video production, photography, and digital content creation that amplifies culture, community, and emerging voices. Kavariious has gained industry experience as a Social Media and Digital Production at Love Renaissance (LVRN) & Rolling Out, contributing to creative development, digital strategy, and content execution for globally recognized music and entertainment companies. He is also a CRIBB Fellow, further demonstrating his commitment to leadership, innovation, and advancing opportunities within the media and entertainment industry.



Darius Rush, MSN, RN, PhD(c)

Augusta University

Darius Rush, PhD(c), MSN, RN, is a PhD candidate in Nursing at Augusta University and a nursing faculty member at Kennesaw State University with 16 years of nursing experience in clinical education, critical care, community health, and HIV-focused care. His academic and professional work centers on health equity, HIV prevention, stigma, and culturally responsive care for underserved populations. He has teaching experience in pharmacology, health assessment, and community health nursing, and is committed to preparing future nurses to address complex social and structural influences on health.



Sylver Rochelin

Instructor, Froca Fitness

Sylver Rochelin Randrianantenaina is a professional dancer from Madagascar. He has spent the last 20 years specializing in traditional dances from across Africa and the Caribbean, as well as Malagasy (from Madagascar) popular dances, Afropop, Hip Hop, Jazz and Contemporary techniques. Sylver founded Froca Fitness in 2018, bringing together these techniques in an accessible way so that students learn from the cultures they represent.



Martez D. R. Smith, PhD, LMSW

Public health scholar, licensed social worker, and community engaged researcher

Dr. Martez D. R. Smith is a public health scholar, licensed social worker, and community-engaged researcher whose work centers Black sexual and gender-diverse communities. His research examines social networks, substance use, HIV prevention and care, and the role of chosen family in health outcomes. As co-host of Searching for John Doe, he bridges scholarship and lived experience to interrogate masculinity, mental health, intimacy, and liberation within Black queer communities. Dr. Smith is committed to developing asset-based, culturally grounded interventions that advance health equity and social justice.



Antar T. Bush, LMSW, MPH, CHES

Seasoned expert in public health communications, a creative storyteller, advocate, and cultural commentator

Antar Bush is a seasoned expert in public health communications, a creative storyteller, advocate, and cultural commentator whose work explores Black queer identity, spirituality, relationships, and self-discovery. Through Searching for John Doe, he brings vulnerability and insight to conversations about masculinity, healing, and belonging. His voice challenges stigma while honoring complexity, inviting audiences to reflect deeply on what it means to live authentically in a world structured by barriers.



Kalvin Leveille, MHA, MHC-LP

Public health leader and HIV/AIDS advocate

Kalvin Leveille is a public health leader and HIV/AIDS advocate with more than 17 years of experience advancing health equity and improving health outcomes for LGBTQ+ people of color and people living with HIV/AIDS. Calvin is dedicated to fostering spaces where Black queer men can engage in honest dialogue about love, trauma, ambition, and growth. As co-host of Searching for John Doe, he centers relational healing and accountability, encouraging conversations that push beyond surface narratives to explore emotional intelligence and liberation.

Presenters



Leisha McKinley-Beach

Founder & CEO, Black Public Health Academy

Leisha McKinley-Beach is a nationally recognized public health strategist and movement builder advancing equitable HIV prevention. She is the co-founder of the Public Health Innovation Lab (PHIL), a founding member of PrEP In Black America. Leisha also founded the Black Public Health Academy and the Atlanta Black Women Leaders on PrEP, and co-created Florida's Sistas Organizing to Survive (SOS) initiative.



Maliek Yuseef Powell

Community Advocate & Media Storyteller, M.I.B. Production House, Independent HIV Advocate

Maliek Yuseef Powell is a Birmingham, Alabama-based media producer, community storyteller, and HIV advocate. With more than a decade of experience in digital media and reality television, his work uses storytelling to challenge stigma, amplify marginalized voices, and create culturally relevant conversations around HIV awareness and prevention.



Nathaniel Currie, DSW, MSW, LCSW

Psychotherapist, NAESM, Inc.

Dr. Nathaniel L. Currie, DSW, LCSW, serves as Associate Professor at Clark Atlanta University Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work. He is a licensed psychotherapist with more than 15 years of clinical practice experience. His practice, research, and instruction centers anti-oppression, the intersections of mental health and public health, and trauma and HIV in Black and Brown communities.



Malachi Walker

Community Health Coordinator, NAESM, Inc.

Malachi Walker is a Community Health Outreach Specialist at NAESM Inc., dedicated to advancing equitable access to care and promoting holistic community wellness. Originally from Savannah, he is a graduate of Morehouse College, Class of 2025, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with a minor in Religion. A minister of the Gospel, Malachi is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity at Turner Theological Seminary. His work lives at the intersection of faith and public health, centering community healing, restorative care, and the transformation of systems that impact marginalized populations.



Lorenzo Robertson

Executive Director, Ujima Men's Collective

Lorenzo is an author, poet, and actor. He wrote his first novel, *Detached*, which focuses on a man with a knack for helping people with their problems while his life spirals out of control. He also published his first book of poetry *eclectic essence: poetry for the mind, body, and spirit*, enlightening readers. In addition, he has written, produced, and performed his one-man show, *me, myself, and i*, which weaves his poetry and monologues into a compelling show about sex, drugs, and loving life. He wrote for the *Gazette Magazine* in Tampa/St. Petersburg area, *Clik Magazine*, and the *Positive Palm Beach* newsletter column *Is anyone listening?* He was a featured actor in *Singing in the Rain* and *Before It Hits Home*, and a dancer in *A Tribute to Women*.



Miss Sophia

Host / Entertainer

Miss Sophia was born in Calvert, Texas, and grew up in Houston, Texas. She attended Texas Southern University, she was a theater major, as well as a computer science minor. She was employed with The Ensemble Theater for several years in Houston. Dallas, Texas, was her home for several years until she relocated to Atlanta, Georgia, which is where she currently resides. Miss Sophia has been in movies, TV shows, on the radio, and she has traveled the world extensively.

Presenters



Ederick Johnson

Program Coordinator, Ujima Men's Collective

Ederick E. Johnson is a renowned advocate, minister, psalmist, musician, and workshop clinician who has dedicated his life to serving others. A native of Bradenton, Florida, he relocated to South Florida in 2011 to attend Florida Memorial University, the only HBCU in the area. With over 12 years of experience working in the field of HIV, Ederick has made significant contributions to his community. As a former Research Associate with Yale University School of Nursing that focused on Black Gay Men in the South (HPTN096), he has built upon his previous role as MSM Coordinator for the Florida Department of Health in Broward County.



Jai The Gentleman

Host/Executive Producer, Dear Black Gay Men Podcast

Jai The Gentleman (pronounced "Jay") is an acclaimed writer, producer, and award-winning host of Dear Black Gay Men Podcast. Through his work as a podcaster and cultural commentator, Jai amplifies the voices and experiences of Black gay men through raw, authentic content and conversations free from taboo. His platform has become a trusted space where no topic is off-limits, fostering open discussions on everything from love and relationships to mental health, identity, and self-empowerment.



Jason M. Dotson, MSD, MHC, LPC, LCADC, ACD

Ph.D. Candidate, Fielding Graduate University

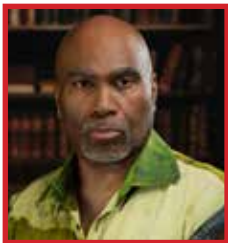
Jason M. Dotson is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and Licensed Clinical Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LCADC) with extensive experience working with at-risk youth and families impacted by trauma, substance use, and systemic challenges. He is the CEO of Wellness with Jason Dotson and Executive Director of WHY (Wellness, Hope, & You) Mental Health, where he leads innovative, culturally responsive interventions. Jason specializes in trauma-informed care, life skills development, and community-based treatment models. He is also a doctoral candidate committed to advancing research and practice that supports marginalized populations.



Alfred Forbes, PH.D.

Advocate & International Consultant, Forbes, LLC

Alfred L. Forbes is an international consultant and advocate with over three decades of experience in health equity, focusing on Black LGBTQ wellness and resilience. He founded A.L. Forbes Consulting and the nonprofit Believers to Achievers, delivering organizational development, coaching, and culturally grounded wellness initiatives across the U.S., Brazil, Benin, Togo, and Ghana.



Daniel Black, PH.D.

Author, Professor, Consultant, Mentor

Dr. Daniel Black is a 30-year professor of African American Studies at Clark Atlanta University. He is also an award-winning novelist, activist, mentor and public speaker. His published works include *They Tell Me of A Home*, *The Sacred Place*, *Perfect Peace*, *Twelve Gates to the City*, *The Coming*, *Listen to the Lambs*, *Don't Cry for Me*, *Black on Black*, and *Isaac's Song*. In 2014, he won the Distinguished Writer's Award from the Mid-Atlantic Writer's Association. The Go On Girl! National Book Club named him "Author of the Year" in 2011 for his best-selling novel *Perfect Peace*. *Perfect Peace* was also chosen as the 2014 selection for "If All Arkansas Read the Same Book" by the Arkansas Center for the Book at the Arkansas State Library.



AK Reese, MSW, CPS-MH

NAESM, Inc.

AK Reese (they/them) is a certified peer specialist, LITE fellow for SPARK RJ, behavioral health intern at NAESM Inc., and MSW candidate at Clark Atlanta University. By way of their own identity and lived experience, they utilize intersectional feminism, mad/disability justice, and a traumainformed lens to promote Black queer/trans liberation. AK identifies as a multidimensional creative with a love of makeup, arts, and poetry. Their emergence in the field is hallmarked by advancing the authentic expression of self and reprogramming unhelpful thought patterns that facilitate the journey back to our bodies.

Presenters



Charles Stephens

Executive Director, Counter Narrative Project

Charles Stephens is the Founder and Executive Director of the Counter Narrative Project (CNP). Over the course of his career, he has been actively engaged in the fields of nonprofit leadership, social impact storytelling, and the arts. As a narrative strategist, he has been committed to utilizing storytelling as a strategy to advance social change. Charles has been and continues to be active in community organizations with current board service for Canopy Atlanta, where he serves as Chair. His past board and advisory board service includes: Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta Mayor's LGBTQ Advisory Board, Actor's Express Theatre Company, Historic Atlanta, and the Atlanta Public Schools LGBTQIA Task Force.



David Brandyn

Sex Educator, Content Creator, Butch Queen

David Brandyn is a Los Angeles-based sex educator, content creator, and community facilitator with over 20 years of experience working with Black gay men. His work focuses on creating culturally relevant, engaging sexual health education for queer people of color across digital platforms and in-person spaces.



John G. Rowell Jr., MPH

Associate Director of Prevention, Alliance of AIDS Services Carolina

From Fayetteville, North Carolina, John graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology from Fayetteville State University and a master's degree in public health (MPH) from UNC-Chapel Hill. Having worked with culturally and generationally diverse groups in educating and advocating for increasing access to medication adherence uptake, stigma reduction, HIV education, prevention and treatment, I developed a passion for holistic integrated care for underserved and overlooked populations.



Darren Wright

Community advocate, patient navigator, and engagement coordinator at Positive Impact Health Centers

Darren B. Wright is a community advocate, patient navigator, and engagement coordinator at Positive Impact Health Centers based in Atlanta, Georgia. He has served in key leadership roles with the agency, and involved in local and national advocacy organizations including chairperson and Community Advisory Board Member for the Ryan White Consortium and an Ambassador for National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC). With over a decade of experience in HIV care and support services, he is committed to amplifying community voices, reducing stigma, and empowering individuals to take an active role in their care. Darren is a champion for all people, and advocates for the marginalized and underserved.

Legends Award Honorees



Michelle L. Allen

Chief Operating Officer, Positive Impact Health Centers

Michelle L. Allen is the newly appointed Chief Operating Officer of Positive Impact Health Centers, where she leads the operations of a complex, multi-site healthcare organization with a \$200+ million budget and more than 350 employees across multiple clinic locations and an administrative center. In her role, she provides strategic leadership for evidence-based quality management as well as organizational functions. While contributing to external partnerships and visibility, she will focus on strengthening internal systems, managing people and infrastructure, and mentoring a diverse leadership team.



LaRon Nelson, PhD, MBA, FNP, FNAP, FNYAM, FAAN

Independent Foundation Professor, Yale University

LaRon E. Nelson is the Independence Foundation Professor of Nursing at Yale University, where he also directs the Community Capacity and Economics Core at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS. A leading global health scientist, Professor Nelson specializes in human-centered implementation science—building synergistic bridges between sustainable community development, healthcare systems, and business model innovation.



Miguel Bujanda

Chief Executive Officer, REACHLA

Miguel Bujanda is a seasoned advocate and leader with over 30 years of experience in community-based organizations throughout Los Angeles and the United States. His work primarily focuses on empowering gay men of color, where he has served as a capacity-building provider, researcher, educator, and community organizer since 1997. Miguel's extensive experience includes leading and organizing social networks for men across various regions of Southern California, fostering community engagement and resilience.



Daniel D. Driffin, DrPH, MPH

Project Manager, External Affairs, HIV Vaccine Trials Network, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center

Dr. Daniel D. Driffin serves as an External Relations Project Manager with the HIV Vaccine Trials Network (HVTN) Leadership and Operations Center at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, WA. In this role, he leads the implementation of stakeholder engagement strategies both domestically and globally. Beyond his work with HVTN, Dr. Driffin co-created the Public Health Innovation Lab (PHIL), an innovative collaborative model designed to operationalize a community-led HIV care and prevention pathway across Georgia. With more than seventeen years of experience, Daniel has worked at the intersection of advocacy and direct community engagement, supporting populations most impacted by HIV across the South and beyond.



Bishop Steven R. Sawyer

Former Executive Director, POCAAN

Bishop Steven R. Sawyer is a nationally recognized public health executive and equity-centered institutional leader whose career has been shaped by a singular conviction: that health is not merely a clinical outcome, but a condition created by justice, dignity, stability, and access. For more than two decades, he has built systems, partnerships, and civic infrastructure designed to improve health outcomes for historically marginalized communities while advancing broader structural equity.



Dewayne Crowder

Executive Director, A Vision 4 Hope

Transformational public health leader and visionary with extensive experience advancing HIV prevention, sexual health innovation, and community-driven healthcare models. Dewayne Crowder serves as the Executive Director of A Vision 4 Hope, Inc., where he has pioneered status-neutral, low-barrier care approaches that expand access to HIV testing, prevention, treatment linkage, and supportive services for underserved populations.

'FROCA FITNESS

*African and Caribbean
Dance Fitness*

comes to

NAESM CONFERENCE 2026



**MONTGOMERY
ALABAMA**



**SATURDAY,
MAY 30, 2026**



**FROM
6:30 A.M.
TO 7:30 A.M.**



**IN EXHIBIT HALL B,
LOBBY LEVEL**

Presented by

SYLVER ROCHELIN,
THE CREATOR AND FOUNDER OF
'FROCA FITNESS



EMPOWERED AGAINST MPOX

Vaccination can help protect you

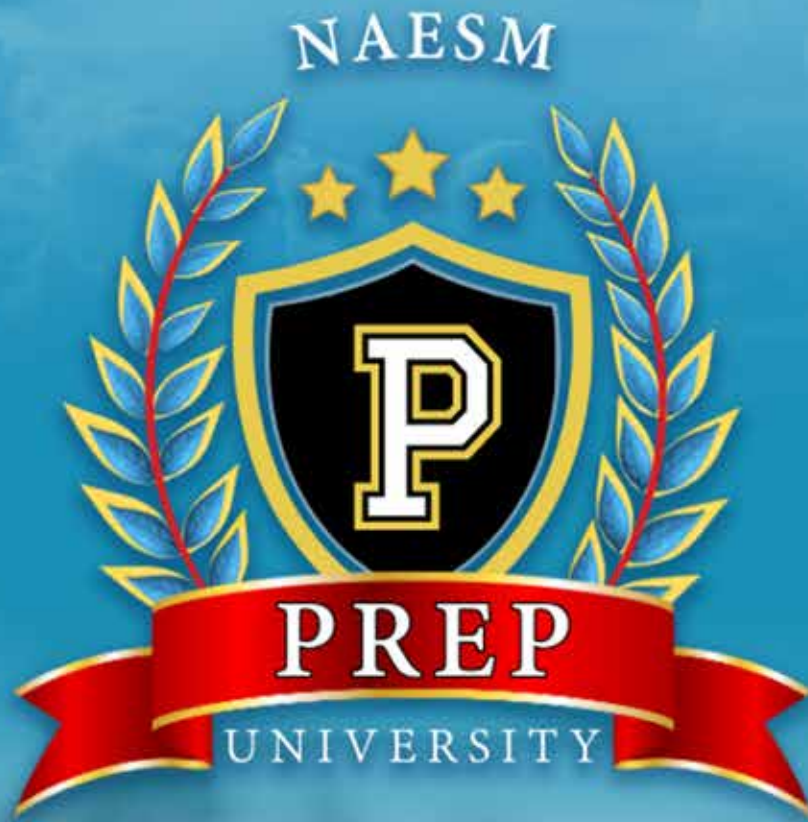
Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men, transgender or nonbinary people with certain risk factors are among those at **highest risk for mpox**

3 out of 4 at-risk individuals are unvaccinated or have not completed the 2-dose series



Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if mpox vaccination is right for you

Learn more at EmpoweredAgainstMpox.com



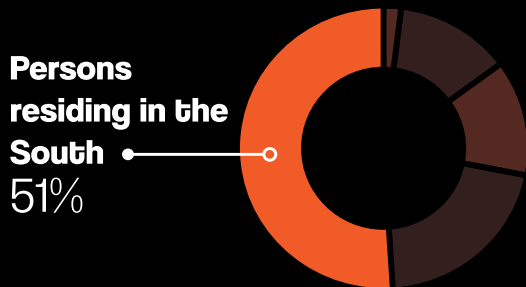
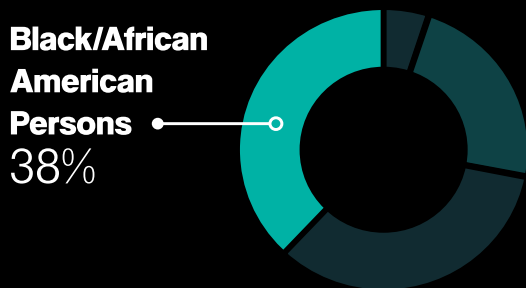
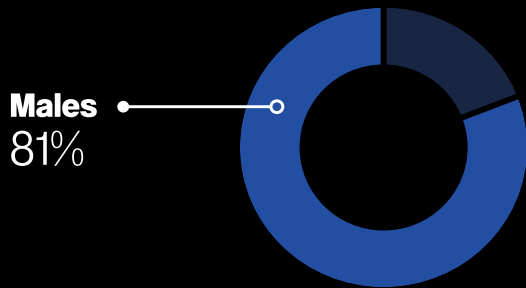
ATLANTA 2027

www.naesminc.org

Contact: Alex Zohore at alexz@naesminc.org

In 2023, in the United States, there were **39,201 HIV diagnoses** among persons aged 13 years and older.

The highest rates of HIV diagnoses were among:



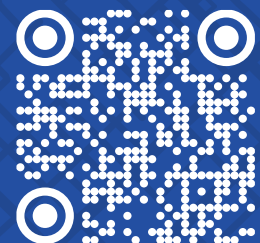
(CDC HIV Surveillance Data)



Men deserve *real* support.

HPTN 096 (BETA) is a research study focused on helping men in the American South get better access to HIV prevention and treatment.

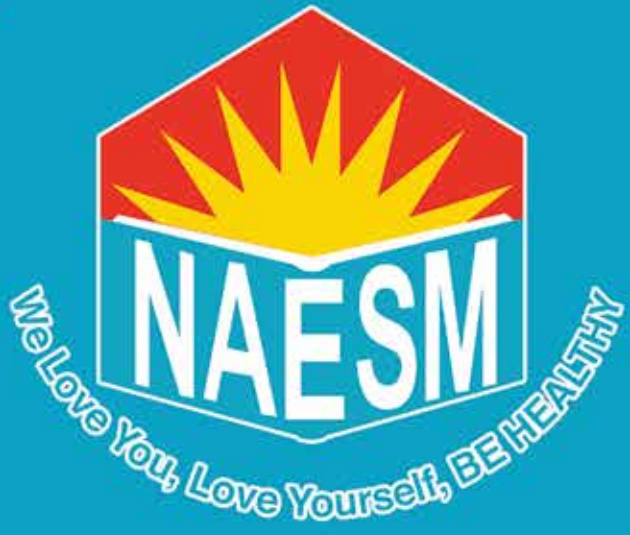
Learn more about HPTN 096 at hptn096.org and follow us on social media.



HPTN 096
Building Empathy,
Transforming Access



HIV TESTING
STI SCREENING
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
HOUSING ASSISTANCE
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