

AN INTRODUCTION

TO



POSITIVE WOMEN'S NETWORK
USA



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- The U.S. Positive Women's Network is a national membership-based organization **led BY and FOR HIV+ women, created to strengthen our power to impact policy and decisions regarding resources that affect our lives.** If you are a woman living with HIV, join the network and flex your power!

The HERSTORY of the US PWN

- The U.S. Positive Women's Network (PWN) was founded in June, 2008, by 28 HIV-positive women reflecting the diversity of the U.S. epidemic, with initial funding from the Ford Foundation. We are **the only national group led by and for HIV-positive women** addressing issues that affect women living with HIV in the U.S.



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Naina Khanna, National Coordinator US PWN and Waheedah Shabazz-EI in Paris France representing the PWN

The HERSTORY of W.O.R.L.D

Currently a project of WORLD
in Oakland, California.

(Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Disease)

WORLD was founded by Rebecca Denison,
and a small group of HIV+ women in
Oakland Ca. in April 1991.

- www.womenhiv.org



Who can Join as Members?

- Any person who is HIV+ and self identifies as a woman can be a part of this network.



- That means both Biological Women and Trans Women are welcome to join.

Who Can Join as Allies?

- That's Easy!
- Anyone who supports the empowerment of women who are living with HIV, and want to see this network flourish
- Regardless of their gender or HIV Status.
- We Value the support of our Allies



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- Strengthens the strategic power of women living with HIV in the United States by:
 - ❖ Identifying, cultivating, and supporting leadership among women living with HIV in the U.S.
 - ❖ Building capacity for collective action between individuals and organizations working in the field of women and HIV
 - ❖ Engaging in strategic campaigns to change policy

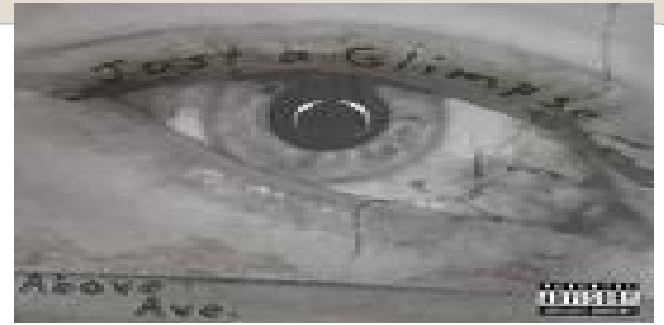
We Value:

- **1.** Explicitly being a network of self-identified WOMEN.
- **2.** The analysis that HIV is a symptom, not the problem.
- **3.** Changing the balance of power.
- **4.** Decision-making processes that prioritize those most impacted by the decision.
- **5.** Sustainability as a practical necessity
- **6.** Strategic campaigns that win us victories and make the best use of our collective resources
- **7.** The meaningful inclusion of all women living with HIV.
- **8.** The input & contribution of well intentioned, well informed allies.
- **9.** Our history and lessons from the past.
- **10.** Mentorship and the development of new leadership.
- **11.** Accountability from ourselves and from others.
- **12.** . Cultivating Leadership that reflects the epidemic

A Glimpse of Just How Bad It Is.

- Estimates by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from 2006 Indicate , there are nearly 300,000 women living with HIV in the United States.





- The data does not include transgender women.
- No accurate national data are available.
- Review of U.S. studies show that HIV prevalence is higher among the African-American transgender male-to-female (MTF) population than any other population

- In 2006 of all the new AIDS diagnoses, 66% of them were among African American Women and Women of Color
- Over 80% of women diagnosed with HIV were infected through heterosexual contact, and about 17% through intravenous drug use.



- The epidemic is taking a particular toll among younger women and low-income women, between the ages of 13 and 39



- Studies show that (76%) of Women with HIV have children under 18 in their homes

So, What's Wrong With Prevention?

- Our federal government funds abstinence-only-till-marriage programs.
- Women have a right to accurate, honest education programs that reduce unintended pregnancy, STI's and HIV.
- Currently, no female-controlled HIV prevention device that she can use without their male partner's consent is available.

So, What's Wrong with Testing ?

- Women perceive themselves at less risk than gay men: This perception can be deadly.
- Some are less likely to offer testing to women than to gay men and other men who have sex with men.
- In some states there are no financial incentives for testing women

So, What's Wrong with Systems of Care?

- Over 50% of women living with HIV are not in regular care.
- Systems of care are often not set up to meet women's needs (childcare, provide accurate information about sexuality and reproductive health options).
- HIV Services must have be gender- and culturally appropriate.

So, What's Wrong with Research?

- Men are physiologically different
- Women are less likely to be represented in clinical trials
- Medications work differently in women's bodies
- Hormonal and life cycle changes
- Little research on menopause and HIV

The PWN Can Alter the Herstory of HIV

- We will call for an end to policies and programs that remain predicated on an outdated male paradigm for male bodies and the life circumstances of men at risk although women now comprise almost one-third of HIV infections in the U.S.

The PWN Can Alter the Herstory of HIV

- An HIV diagnosis should not equal a sentence to a lifetime of poverty.
- We know women receiving disability are thinking about re-entering the workforce, but risk losing their SSI benefits without knowing whether they will be able to work without getting sick.

The PWN Can Alter the Herstory of HIV

- Ryan White Part D, the only federal funding stream for HIV-affected women and families, has seen a decline in funding over the last five years.
- The PWN is working on Health Care Reform as well as the upcoming Ryan White reauthorization to ensure that women and families living with HIV have high quality services.

The PWN Can Alter the Herstory of HIV

- By addressing the drastic under-funding of domestic HIV prevention research for women.
- Call for national data on transgender women living with HIV.
- They are often classified as MSM (Men who have Sex with Men).
- We strongly recommend the CDC push states to adopt gender identity in HIV surveillance data to address this critical issue.

The PWN Can Alter the Herstory of HIV

- We can call for Special Focus on Women Affected by Incarceration.
- Research shows that incarcerated women are 36 times more likely than non-incarcerated women to be living with HIV.
- Why?



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- We are calling for All HIV-positive women, including transgender women, to join and become meaningfully involved in decision-making about the development of policies to ensure our needs are being met.

The Philadelphia Region PWN



The Philadelphia Region PWN

- Will be hosting Monthly Capacity Building Events
- We no longer want to be perceived as just Beneficiaries of AIDS Services, But as the experts on what women need.
- In order to be perceived as experts we must Increase our Capacity.
- Join the US PWN

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