



# Black Leadership Council on HIV

revised July 2008

## Vision

We envision a community with the leadership, support systems and resources to:

- ♦ overcome isolation, vulnerabilities and health disparities;
- ♦ provide unconditional support, love and care for individuals, families and loved ones affected by or at risk for HIV and AIDS.

## Mission

The mission of the Black Leadership Council on HIV is to create, nurture and sustain leadership and action within African American and African immigrant communities to stop the spread of HIV in Seattle and King County.

This will involve members:

- ➔ *speaking out* about and increasing awareness of the issues related to this disease
- ➔ *seeking* community-wide involvement
- ➔ *becoming* trustworthy sources for accurate reliable information
- ➔ *advocating* for resources
- ➔ *advising* public health and government officials
- ➔ *recommending* political, educational and other strategies, approaches and systems changes to end this epidemic in our community.

## Values & Operating Principles

The BLC is a dynamic, learning organization. Continuous and shared learning from interactions with each other, our constituencies and our environment is the basis for achieving present objectives & transforming the BLC in response to ever changing conditions.

- We value the African American community and its inalienable right to health.
- We value open, honest communication which will lay the basis for us to hear, respect and work through different and opposing views before taking any action.
- We value consensus, recognizing that consensus is not a passive notion; rather it is a way to actively build unity and ensure that each of us has a voice at the table.
- We value each of us being serious and doing the work necessary to move us forward.
- We value the diversity within our communities of Black people.
- We value each member's time and work and our willingness to volunteer.

- We value each member's development as we all acquire new learning and skills.
- We value a safe, supportive environment for dialogue.
- We value accountability on the part of each member and we commit to holding our leaders accountable.
- We value adherence to these principles and beliefs.

## Membership

- Membership is open to anyone who supports the mission, vision and values of the Council.
- New members must attend 2 consecutive meetings in order to vote on BLC actions.

## Public Health Role

- Facilitate and provide clerical, administrative, technical & information support for the work of the BLC.
- PH support staff are not members of the BLC. They may participate in discussion, but do not vote.

## Decision-making model

- It is important to hear, respect and work through different and sometimes opposing views before taking action. The primary decision-making model for the BLC will be consensus.
- All people present at a meeting are encouraged to participate in discussion.
- The facilitator is responsible for assuring that voices are heard and that no one monopolizes discussions.
- Consensus requires a quorum to be present. A quorum equals 50% + 1 of currently eligible voting members.
- When it is necessary to move a process along and consensus cannot be achieved, it may be necessary to vote.
- New members must attend 2 consecutive meetings to earn voting privileges. Voters who miss two consecutive meetings lose their voting privileges, but can earn them back at the second meeting attended after the absence.
- Voting privileges are conferred on individuals, not agencies or organizations.
- Voting privileges apply to the Steering and general BLC meetings.
- A quorum is required to take a vote; decisions will require 60% of voting members present to pass.

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## **Governance**

The BLC has a steering committee, a chair (or co-chairs) and a facilitator. Additional positions may be required in the future. Clerical and administrative support will be provided by Public Health staff.

### ■ **Steering Committee**

- Is open to all members of the BLC.
- SC members commit to a minimum of 1 year on the committee.
- SC members need to attend both Steering Committee and general meetings of the BLC.
- Takes direction from the general meeting of the BLC.
- Provides direction to the Chair and the Facilitator.
- Fields press inquiries.
- Reviews/approves or delegates responsibility for correspondence.
- Reviews work plans for the Council.
- Sets agenda for general meeting.
- Recommends issues and actions to the Council for consideration.
- Will guide the BLC's work between meetings of the entire membership.
- Serves as a think tank for the work of the Council.
- Is a working group. One of its main tasks will be to establish other work groups as needed to engage BLC members in hands-on activities. (Examples: engaging communities in conversations about HIV & AIDS; utilizing various media like web sites, radio shows, newspapers, etc. to infuse HIV awareness into the minds of constituents; influencing public policy to effect systemic change; etc.)

■ **Facilitator** – Jsani Henry currently serves in this role.

The facilitator will be African American. If facilitation is not provided by Public Health, a stipend should be offered for this responsibility.

#### **Responsibilities**

- ♦ Facilitate general BLC and Steering Committee meetings
- ♦ Assure that minority opinions are voiced and heard
- ♦ Keep discussions and decision making processes on track at meetings
- ♦ Respect and facilitate the BLC decision-making model

#### **Qualities**

- Ability to move the group along to arrive at tangible outcomes
- Realize importance of process, especially as it relates to leadership building
- Firm understanding of mission, vision and values of BLC
- Willingness to take direction from Steering Committee

■ **Chair (or Co-Chairs)** – elected by membership. Current co-chairs are La Tanya Horace-Cheatham & Michele Peake Andrasik.

The Chair (or Co-Chairs) will be African American.

#### **Responsibilities**

- ♦ Participate in Steering Committee
- ♦ Participate in public BLC events
- ♦ Promote consensus & unity of purpose within the Council
- ♦ Represent BLC to the media, government, fund sources and various parts of the community

#### **Qualities**

- Credibility and ties to the community
- Compassion – the community needs to perceive that the chair (or chairs) cares about them
- Skills as a spokesperson; a “public face” for the BLC – must be articulate, able to interface with media & public
- Commitment and comfort with same sex issues
- Passion, energy and time to prioritize BLC work
- Experience leveraging/raising private and public funds
- Ability to garner consensus within Steering Committee and larger Council
- Notoriety is helpful

BLC members need to support the chair by helping to organize and being present at BLC events and activities, and by participating in outreach, telling others about upcoming events.

### **Work Groups**

In addition to the Steering Committee, the BLC has various work groups. Current work group activities include

- ♦ Community Outreach & Education
- ♦ Recruitment
- ♦ Collaborating with medical practices to recruit and retain Black infectious disease and HIV specialist medical providers.

Public Health staff provide clerical and administrative support for the Steering Committee and the work groups.

### **Meetings**

The Steering Committee meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month. Work groups meet as needed to get their work done. The BLC sponsors general meetings and community events throughout the year.



**SPEAK THE TRUTH**

**Stop HIV!**