



Hon. David A. Paterson
Governor, State of New York
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

July 20, 2010

Dear Governor Paterson,

We the undersigned organizations respectfully request that you sign into law S08227/A11487, sponsored by Senate and Assembly Health Committee Chairmen Tom Duane and Richard Gottfried respectively. This legislation seeks to incorporate routine offering of HIV testing as part of everyday healthcare for New Yorkers. We believe that this legislation will effect change by removing barriers to testing for healthcare providers and patients alike.

If enacted into law, this legislation will help to decrease the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS, while increasing the number of people tested each year. By simply offering the test to virtually every patient as part of their routine care, regardless of their perceived risk, more people will be aware of their status and we can get those who test positive into proper care sooner. Additionally, we will begin to see a more accurate picture of the epidemic in New York. With more knowledge, we will be better able to address the trends of the epidemic and more accurately identify those New Yorkers who are unaware of their HIV status. Every New Yorker will be offered the test, and will be able to make more informed decisions about their healthcare and their lives. Furthermore, this legislation, if signed, will allow for a smoother and more seamless consent process, that will be less onerous on both the provider and the patient.

Currently over 120,000 New Yorkers are living with HIV/AIDS, throughout each of the 62 counties in New York. There are more than 5,000 new HIV infections diagnosed each year; 1,600 of which are concurrent AIDS diagnoses, indicating some have been living with HIV for several years. This legislation has the potential to significantly reduce the number of concurrent HIV/AIDS diagnoses as well as ensure that patients are connected to the appropriate care if and when they need it. The importance of this legislation is far reaching in ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic. One in four New Yorkers living with HIV does not know it, while nearly 70 percent of new infections each year are caused by individuals unaware of their HIV status. By getting more New Yorkers tested and by getting those who test positive into proper care, we will see a significant decrease in the number of new infections.

This bill overwhelmingly passed both the Senate and Assembly. We, the undersigned, urge you to swiftly sign this groundbreaking legislation into law and help bring and end to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in New York. Thank you.

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New York AIDS Coalition
Adolescent AIDS Program – Montefiore
Medical Center
African Services Committee
AIDS Center of Queens County
AIDS Service Center of NYC
Albany Damien Center
Alianza Dominicana, Inc.
American Indian Community House
Asian & Pacific Islander Coalition
for HIV/AIDS (APICHA)
Bronx AIDS Services
Bronx HIV CARE Network
Bronx Independent Living Services
Brooklyn AIDS Task Force
CAMBA, Inc.
Center for Community Alternatives
Central New York HIV CARE Network
Central New York Services
Centro Civico of Amsterdam
CitiWide Harm Reduction
City View Pharmacy
Community Health Action of Staten Island
Community Healthcare Network
Diaspora Community Services
Empire Justice Center
Family Health Project
Finger Lakes HIV CARE Network
GROUP Ministries, Inc.
Harlem United Community AIDS Center
Harm Reduction Coalition
Iris House

Latino Commission on AIDS
Leadership Training Institute
Legal Action Center
Liberty Resources
Long Island Council on Alcoholism &
Drug Dependence
Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center
Nassau Inmate Advocacy Group
Nassau Suffolk HIV CARE Network
National Black Leadership Commission
on AIDS
New York Association on HIV Over 50
New York State Committee of Methadone
Program Administrators
Northeastern New York HIV CARE Network
Outreach Development Corporation
Partnership for the Homeless
Phoenix House
Planned Parenthood of Nassau County
RedRibbon, Inc.
Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS
Ryan White HIV CARE Network of
Northeastern New York
Southern Tier AIDS Program
Steinway Child and Family Services
SUNY Upstate Medical University –
Designated AIDS Center
Thursday's Child of Long Island
VillageCare
Voices of Women of Color Against HIV/AIDS
Western New York HIV CARE Network
William F. Ryan Community Health Network
Women's Initiative to Stop HIV – New York