



24 West 25th Street
New York, New York 10010
212-675-3288
www.latinoaidsagenda.org

The National Latino AIDS Action Network (NLAAN) congratulates President-Elect Barack Obama on his historic victory and pledges our support. As a consortium of more than 300 organizations from across the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands working to address the impact of HIV/AIDS within the Latino community, we are proud of the role that emerging voters, particularly Latinos, have played in this election. We clearly recognize that political and health advocacy go hand in hand and that a population with hope is one that will work to prevent HIV/AIDS.

NLAAN is committed to partnering with President-Elect Obama's administration and a new Congress to achieve a comprehensive national AIDS strategy. We know that the public health crisis produced by HIV/AIDS demands leadership and a commitment of resources, and will work diligently to support the change needed for the development of inclusive Federal policies that improve HIV prevention and access to care.

As the largest minority group in the U.S., Hispanics/Latinos are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. The tremendous impact of the epidemic continues to affect the health and well being of Latinos across the U.S. and its dependent territories. **Latinos in the U.S. represent 15.3% (U.S. Census Bureau) of the population but account for 24.3% of the new HIV infections (CDC).** Latinos are three times more likely than Caucasians to be HIV positive or to have an AIDS diagnosis and more likely to test late in their disease. Latinos share the socioenvironmental problems faced by other disenfranchised minority populations such as poverty, lack of access to culturally relevant health care and prevention education, and lack of comprehensive health insurance.

The acute HIV/AIDS crisis affecting Latinos demands immediate attention, understanding and action at the national level and it is only through committed leadership, enlightened policies, and targeted resources that we will begin to prevent HIV/AIDS. NLAAN looks to the administration of President-Elect Obama to guide us in the right direction and strongly believes that Tuesday's win is a clear message that change is needed and that as a country we can no longer afford to sit back and allow any of its citizens to remain uncared for or further disenfranchised. The full potential and impact of the new administration may not be known for years but NLAAN is energized about all the possibilities for improving the lives and health of Latinos and all people of color.

As President-Elect Barack Obama has said in the past, "Every time someone is infected with HIV/AIDS, they are infected with a virus that could have been prevented. Every time that someone dies of AIDS untreated, they die prematurely." We know that as President he will continue to generate concrete actions for all those at risk or infected with HIV/AIDS and we stand ready to assist and facilitate our mutual pursuit of a results-oriented agenda on HIV/AIDS, which includes national healthcare reform and creation of a tailored, culturally grounded National AIDS Strategy.