

The HIV Research Section is a leader in HIV prevention research, working with Bay Area communities to discover effective HIV prevention strategies that will reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS globally. Working under the umbrella of the San Francisco Department of Public Health, the Section conducts innovative research that is guiding global approaches in HIV prevention, such as HIV vaccines. The Section strives to involve community voices in every aspect of the development and conduct of our studies. Including communities of color in HIV prevention research is vital, as African American and Latino populations in the United States suffer disproportionate impact from the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The involvement of communities of color in research is complicated, however, by many factors, such as community distrust of government and research based on historical wrongdoing such as Tuskegee, and lack of access to information about research.

The Research Section is working in several ways to engage San Francisco's diverse communities of color in research. This proposal outlines two specific projects in support of that goal. First, we need support in the development of a short documentary through a partnership of the Rising Blackness advocates, the Section, and KRON4, about the challenges and successes of African American men and trans people living in the Tenderloin neighborhood and struggling with issues around health, and HIV/AIDS in particular. Second, we participate on the African American Action Planning Group, convened by the Department of Public Health, which is planning on holding a march from the Tenderloin to the Castro for Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on February 5, 2010. We are seeking funding for t-shirts for the marchers on that day.

In May, 2009, the HIV Research Section in the San Francisco Department of Public Health received a grant from the San Francisco Foundation to promote community design of innovative HIV prevention strategies within the Bayview and Tenderloin neighborhoods. The project involved conducting in-depth interviews with stakeholders in each of those communities about their perceptions about the HIV/AIDS epidemic in African American communities. The data from those interviews were analyzed and presented back to the community for feedback in August, and then put into use by two groups of neighborhood advocates who are designing and implementing new HIV prevention strategies. The idea for a Black man's march came from those interviews, and the proposed video project came from the advocates currently working in the Tenderloin, called Rising Blackness.

Drawing on this summer's qualitative research, the Rising Blackness advocates' group chose to focus, in part, on increasing the visibility of African Americans in San Francisco as a strategy to decrease stigma and isolation, two factors they believe contribute to the community's risk for HIV infection. In order to achieve this goal, one of the advocates cultivated a relationship with KRON4, a local television station, to inquire about developing a 30 minute program profiling the lives of African American men in the Tenderloin. KRON4 is enthusiastic about this project, offering to donate a significant amount of time and energy to make it happen. They presented the Section with a package for the development and airing of the program that they estimate to be worth \$60,000, for the price of \$10,000.

The result will be a short documentary that would air leading into the Sunday news in primetime. The program would also be available for viewing indefinitely on the KRON4 website, and rights would be shared so that DVDs of it could be made and distributed by the Section and the advocate's group.

The Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day March is being planned and organized by a coalition of community based organizations and offices within the Department of Public Health. The idea for the march was surfaced during one of the Section's key informant interviews with a Tenderloin resident who spoke about his sense of disconnection within the African American communities in San Francisco, and about how he felt devalued as a Black man living here. The Planning Group was galvanized by the idea of a march, which they agreed would increase the visibility of African Americans, and a sense of community among them as they unite to fight HIV/AIDS. The planning group believes that the marchers wearing t-shirts that read, "I know my history, I know my HIV status" would be particularly powerful towards that end. The goal for this march is to raise awareness about African Americans in San Francisco, and in particular the disproportionate mortality rates from AIDS among African American men. Through this proposal, we are seeking \$2500 to purchase 200 t-shirts at a rate of \$12 per shirt.

The Section is seeking your support for these ground-breaking projects.