

## **ATTACKS ON SCIENCE = ATTACKS ON HIV PREVENTION**

### ***Join the H-POP to fight for Prevention Justice***

**Despite a drastic reduction in AIDS incidence from a peak of 150,000 in the mid-1980s, much continues to be said by both conservative and progressive critics about the “failure” of HIV prevention.**

The rate of AIDS transmission is increasing in specific populations, including women of color, rural communities, and youth. The growing specificity of the epidemic requires the development of sophisticated and targeted prevention strategies. The answer to the question “what works?” is not only dependent on our understanding of the epidemiology and traditional risk factors associated with HIV, but also the political and structural forces affecting those communities hardest hit by AIDS.

It is one of the AIDS movement's greatest hallmarks that social scientists, educators and policy makers have worked together to create multilayered prevention education programs. However, the recent clash of ideology and science in the federal political arena, so hotly debated with respect to stem-cell research, has grave implications for this unity and the future of AIDS prevention. For example, although ten years of cumulative behavioral research both supports comprehensive sexuality education and seriously questions value of “abstinence-only-until-marriage” programs, levels of federal funding for abstinence-only education continue to increase.

**The emphasis of ideology over evidence-based research in Congress stimulates censorship and discourages a frank debate on HIV prevention.**

We have seen frontal attacks on prevention in recent years, including the flat funding of federal grant money and audits, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. The integrity of the clinical and behavioral science that informs best prevention practices has also suffered. While educators and service providers scramble to adapt programs to restrictive mandates, behavioral science is undermined by threats that proposals including such terms as “men who have sex with men” or “sex worker” will go unfunded.

Although it is disappointing to see the challenge of HIV prevention continue into its third decade, now is the time to invest, not back away from research and programming that can support our efforts to adapt prevention strategy to a rapidly changing epidemic.

Now is the time for professionals across the spectrum of HIV/AIDS, including activists, service providers and social scientists, to come together and hold our leaders accountable.

**To join the fight for scientific integrity and defend effective HIV prevention, join CHAMP'S HIV Prevention Organizing Project [H-POP].**

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### Yes, I want to join the H-POP!

Name:

Organization:

Address:

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Comments:

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## What is CHAMP?

The **Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP)** is an initiative building a powerful community-based movement that bridges HIV/AIDS, human rights, and struggles for social and economic justice. CHAMP's **HIV Prevention Organizing Project (H-POP)** initiates and assists national organizing campaigns to defend and expand HIV prevention efforts. Current priorities include: debunking attacks on condom effectiveness; protecting scientific objectivity in government-funded research; and opposing abstinence-only education.