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Newark's AAOGC and The Mayor's Office LBTGQ Commission launch HIV Prevention & Testing Campaign "Status Is Everything"

Newark, NJ, February 4, 2010 – The African American Office of Gay Concerns (AAOGC.org), joins Mayor Cory A Booker, and the LBTGQ Commission to launch "Status Is Everything", an HIV testing campaign targeting African American men between the ages of 18-24 who have sex with men in the Greater Newark area. "Status Is Everything" is the first HIV social marketing campaign in New Jersey to utilize text messaging, Twitter, Facebook, PSAs and large-scale advertising. The New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services Division of HIV/AIDS Services funds the campaign, as part of its efforts to target high-risk African American men. Results will be evaluated through the HIV Prevention Community Planning Support and Development Initiative of Rutgers University.

"Since my administration took office in 2006, we have taken significant strides to unite and create a healthier Newark," said Mayor Cory Booker, who will be speaking at the Press Conference. "Today is another example of a great community partnership which is using 21st-century technology to communicate a simple message to persons at risk: get yourself tested for HIV and AIDS. Only with the health of our residents can we build a stronger, safer, prouder City."

Candidates can receive 24-hour access to local Newark based testing centers three ways: by texting NJ and their zipcode (NJ07102) to 36363, 1-866-HIV-CHECK, or www.statusiseverything.org. "Rip Road's mobile platform supports many city and state departments of health and the CDC and we are thrilled to work with Newark on such an innovative marketing and technology program", says Eric Levin, President of Rip Road, the text-messaging vendor used in this campaign.

Local African American men who self-identify as men who have sex with men are used in the original photography and PSA's, which are key to the campaign's success. Tamara Fleming Principal and Creative Director of FEMWORKS, LLC said, "My vision for this campaign was to create images & graphics that spoke directly to the target market. Our goal was to create affirming visuals and imagery of African American gay men that are easy to relate to."

"I think the greatest thing about this project is that we took the question to the very people we serve. What you see in this campaign is definitely consumer-driven", said Gary Paul Wright, the Executive Director of the AAOGC. In an effort to keep up with Generation Y, the AAOGC utilized social media networks

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including YouTube and CauseCast, which allows for content sharing, interaction, and visitor contributions on a national basis.

About African American Office of Gay Concerns (AAOGC)

AAOGC's mission is to serve as a resource for the well-being of Gay men of color, inclusive of, but not limited to the gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning communities through outreach, education and compassionate care. The African American Office of Gay Concerns is committed to delivering quality HIV/AIDS services to the Gay community in the Newark Area. We provide an array of services focusing on changing individual behavior. For more information about AAOGC or "Status Is Everything", please call 973-639-0700 or visit www.AAOGC.org.