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HealthHIV Hosts Mississippi Workshop Examining Treatment of Minority Women Living With HIV

November 4th Gathering to Develop Medical Guidelines for HIV Positive Women in Rural South

HATTIESBURG, MS – HealthHIV, a national non-profit organization, today announced plans to co-host, with the Southeast Mississippi Rural Health Initiative (SeMRHI), a daylong workshop examining issues facing minority women living with HIV in the rural South. The November 4th workshop will review medical guidelines for the comprehensive primary medical care of minority women living with HIV in the rural South.

“New strategies need to take into account the changing face of the HIV epidemic, and address the increasing rate of HIV among African-American women in rural communities,” said HealthHIV Executive Director Brian Hujdich. “This workshop represents an opportunity for us to develop guidelines for best medical practices for minority women in the rural South and offer medical professionals tested strategies to treat, care and support this underserved segment of the community.”

“Bringing this workshop to Hattiesburg is a strong indicator of just how serious we are about HIV in our community,” said Hope Braley, CEO of Southeast Mississippi Rural Health Initiative (SeMRHI). “We can no longer take for granted that HIV is a problem for ‘other’ people in ‘other’ places. HIV is here in rural Mississippi and we are tackling it head-on.”

Currently more than 1 million people in the United States are estimated to be living with HIV. In 2007 the HIV rate in Mississippi was slightly higher than the national estimated rate (21.6 per 100,000 compared to 21.1 nationally). Mississippi currently ranks 11th in the nation for number of AIDS cases among females.

“The importance of the guidelines we develop in Hattiesburg cannot be understated,” continued Hujdich. “Strategies we develop here will be shared with health care professionals throughout the rural South in order to interrupt the spread of the disease and improve the treatment of HIV positive women.”

HealthHIV is a Washington, DC based non-profit organization working to advance effective prevention, care and support for people living with, or at risk for, HIV/AIDS through education, technical assistance and health services research to organizations, communities and professionals. HealthHIV supports primary care providers treating HIV, as well as community and faith-based organizations involved in HIV prevention, care and treatment.

To learn more about the November 4, 2009 *Women & HIV* workshop visit www.healthhiv.org

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