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LOS ANGELES-BASED HEALTH JUSTICE RECEIVES MAJOR FUNDING TO SUPPORT HIV SERVICES FOR PAROLEES

LOS ANGELES, CA -- February 7, 2011 – The Center for Health Justice (Health Justice) is proud to announce the receipt of one of ten national awards to link HIV+ individuals to care and services. The five-year grant comes from the Washington D.C.-based **AIDS United** through its Access to Care (A2C) initiative.

The grant was awarded at a time when National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is recognized nationwide. Celebrated all month in Los Angeles, the initiative was designed to get Blacks educated, tested, involved or treated for HIV/AIDS. Although the A2C award will serve all race/ethnicities, much of the benefit may go to African Americans who are disproportionately impacted by both HIV and incarceration. People in prisons are about 3 times more likely to have HIV than the general population. Nevertheless, on release, many are not quickly linked to medical services that will reduce their viral load and maintain their health.

“AIDS United is proud to be supporting the work of Health Justice and its academic and community collaborators with this SIF grant,” said Mark Ishaug, AIDS United President and CEO. “In addition to developing innovative ways to help get people living with HIV in Los Angeles into the care they need, Health Justice’s commitment to matching its grant from AIDS United with resources from the local private sector will significantly increase the funding available for critical access to care activities for Los Angeles County’s populations most impacted by the epidemic.”

Health Justice’s grant from AIDS United will support the development of the **Positive Parolee Network (PPN)**, a collaboration between Health Justice, **Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science**, and the **OASIS Clinic** to provide consistent, sustainable, clinically supervised peer-driven support and linkage to medical care for individuals living with HIV who are paroling from California’s state prisons to Los Angeles County, in order to engage and retain them in HIV medical treatment soon after their release.

“We are pleased to receive this award and even happier to be able to provide desperately-needed linkage to care services for Angelenos living with HIV returning from prison,” said Executive Director, Cajetan Luna. “We are also thrilled to be working in collaboration with OASIS Clinic and Charles Drew University, two institutions with a long history of providing services to underserved populations here.”

For information about AIDS United’s A2C Initiative, visit <http://www.aidsunited.org/community-impact/access-to-care-a2c>.

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ABOUT CENTER FOR HEALTH JUSTICE

Founded in 2000, Center for Health Justice is a non-profit organization focused on HIV and incarceration in California. The Health Justice staff provides services that empower people affected by incarceration and HIV to make healthier choices as well as advocate for the elimination of disparities between prisoner health and public health. For information visit www.healthjustice.net

ABOUT CHARLES R. DREW UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND SCIENCE (CDU)

The University strives to improve the health status of under served communities through innovative biomedical research, and progressive health policies. By maintaining and expanding relationships with local medical schools, research institutions and community-based organizations, CDU is focused on eliminating the health disparities by providing access to and delivery of healthcare services to underserved populations. For information visit www.cdrewu.edu .

ABOUT OASIS CLINIC

OASIS strives to provide compassionate high quality care that improves the health status of patients, their families and the community without regard to their ability to pay. The Outpatient Alternative Services Intervention System (O.A.S.I.S.) provides confidential HIV services to clients through 5 (five) programs: Testing, Early Intervention, Outpatient Treatment, Chemotherapy, and Focus Intervention and Partner Notification Prevention Program. For information visit www.oasisclinicla.org.

ABOUT AIDS UNITED

AIDS United strives to end the AIDS epidemic in the United States through national, regional and local policy/advocacy, strategic grant making, and organizational capacity building. With partners throughout the country, the agency ensures that people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS have access to the prevention and care services they need and deserve. The creation of AIDS United combines private-sector fundraising, philanthropy, coalition building, public policy expertise, and advocacy — as well as a network of passionate local and state partners — to most effectively and efficiently respond to the disease in the communities most impacted by it. For information visit www.aidsunited.org