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AIDS Arms Inc. announces its expansion of HIV clinical services, launches Call to Arms campaign

North Texas' leading AIDS service agency to meet challenge of increasing HIV infection rate

DALLAS, TEXAS, Wednesday, April 7, 2010 — With the Dallas EMA (Eligible Metropolitan Area) ranking as the leading area of newly-reported HIV infections in the State and a projection of 7,000 new HIV cases by the year 2012, AIDS Arms, Inc., (AAI) has embarked on its Call to Arms campaign to fight back against the rising epidemic and its health and economic impact on the community. Its Call to Arms includes expansion of HIV medical, prevention and social support services with the addition of a new medical clinic in Oak Cliff in early 2012. The Call to Arms campaign will kick off on April 28, 2010, and includes a \$8 million, four-year effort for the new facility and expansion of services.

"The HIV epidemic in Dallas is reaching crisis levels in terms of our city's health status, economics and quality of life," said Raeline Nobles, executive director. "HIV impacts every one of us today in huge ways. By the year 2012 there will be over 25,000 people living with HIV and AIDS in our area. It will take all of us working together with a commitment to hard work, wisdom and investments to create a healthier, safer community for our families, friends and neighbors. Without quality, accessible medical care for HIV+ individuals, their health and life stability are quickly compromised and the risk of transmitting the disease to others is magnified. Our best prevention efforts for HIV/AIDS are to create greater access to specialized HIV medical care, education and support."

AAI currently has three Dallas centers that assisted a combined 3,300 individuals with outpatient medical care, treatment and support necessary to manage the challenges of living with HIV/AIDS. AAI centers are located in Oak Cliff (Main Office on Sunset Avenue near Zang Blvd. and Jefferson), Central Dallas and South Dallas (AAI Peabody Health Center near MLK and S. Central Expressway). Another 4,000 individuals benefited last year by AAI's HIV/STD prevention outreach and testing efforts.

"The clinical demands of individuals living with HIV have evolved to a point where we need to expand the availability of medical services beyond our current facility," said Dr. Keith Rawlings, medical director of AAI's Peabody Health Center.

AAI has assembled a resource development team as diverse as Dallas to come up with the funds needed for expansion. It has named television personality and hi-tech genius Mark Bunting as its fundraiser chair. Mark and Kelly Bunting will host the campaign's kickoff on Wednesday, April 28, at 7 p.m., at their private residence located at 3601 Beverly Drive in Dallas. "It is simply imperative, that we as a community of resources and compassion, not fail in this responsibility," said Bunting.

AAI has already successfully obtained a \$250,000 grant from the Meadows Foundation and another investment from the King Foundation for its new clinic. "We are so appreciative of The Meadows Foundation and the Carl and Florence King Foundation. We are very proud to have them as our pioneer supporters in our Call to Arms campaign," said AAI Board Chair Scott Chase.

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AAI's immediate goals for the expansion are to meet some of the most pressing needs identified in the community. Noble also wants the development of a management structure, professional staff, technical infrastructure, information systems and facilities necessary to support planned expansion of AAI's services. These efforts will lead to a long-term initiative to elevate its roles in the regional, national and international fight against HIV/AIDS.

By treating HIV/AIDS clients, AAI estimates it has saved local hospitals more than \$6 million in indigent emergency room and inpatient costs by eliminating the need for such services through adherence to care provided by its outpatient and case management services. It costs approximately **\$2,800** for one HIV-positive person **to receive a full year** of care and support from AAI – not including medications. An HIV-positive person who is not under regular care would incur an average **\$12,000 bill for just one emergency room visit.**

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AIDS Arms mission is to combat HIV/AIDS in our community by improving the lives and health of individuals living with the disease and preventing its spread. In 2009, AIDS Arms, Inc. served over 3,300 HIV impacted individuals and reached another 4,000 with prevention education, testing and behavior interventions. Created in 1986, AAI has evolved its services into a comprehensive continuum of care that includes HIV prevention/testing, outpatient medical care, medication assistance, case management, substance abuse and mental health, and a telemedicine program within the Texas correctional system for HIV+ prisoners preparing for re-entry into Dallas County. It partners with over 90 other AIDS service organizations, public and private health entities and community service organizations in a twelve county area to create effective coordination of care, support and education for over 18,600 HIV+ individuals and their caregivers. For more information please contact Margaret Byrne at mbyrne@aidsarms.org or 214.521.5191.