



Message to:

- **The White House**
- **Office of National AIDS Policy**
- **Department of Health and Human Services.**

More people are living with and dying from HIV in the South than in any other region of the country!

Call to Action:

As an urgent matter, SASI calls on the White House, the Office of National AIDS Policy, and the Department of Health and Human Services to convene a **State of the South Task Force** including leading administration officials across federal agencies, leading state officials, private sector partners, people living with HIV in the South, and their HIV health and social service providers to:

1. Recommend National HIV/AIDS Strategy implementation steps directed at the Southeast;
2. Identify collaborative opportunities across federal agencies to address the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Southeast;
3. Identify funding opportunities for projects aimed at evaluating best HIV prevention and care practices for the Southern U.S.

SASI calls on the White House to convene a **State of the South Task Force** and announce the Task Force members at the International AIDS Conference in July 2012.

Background:

SASI (the Southern HIV/AIDS Strategy Initiative) is a broad-based coalition advocating for increased federal resources to target the HIV epidemic in the Southeastern United States. SASI has released a comprehensive report on the HIV epidemic in the South: [“HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the South Reaches Crisis Proportions in Last Decade.”](#)

The SASI Report documents the HIV crisis faced by Deep South:

1. People living with HIV die at much higher rates in the Deep South¹.
2. The Deep South has the highest rates of new HIV diagnoses in the United States.
3. The Deep South has the highest rates of new AIDS diagnoses in the United States.

The SASI Report documents the HIV crisis faced by particular populations in the Deep South:

1. 54% of new HIV cases among African Americans in the United States were in the Deep South.
2. 1 in 5 African American MSM in the South are estimated to be living with HIV.
3. 8 of the Deep South states report a higher proportion of women among new HIV infections than the US average.
4. One-half of the new HIV diagnoses among Hispanics/Latinos occurred in the Southern US.

The SASI Report documents additional factors in the South that contribute to the HIV Crisis:

1. A majority (64%) of persons with AIDS living in rural areas reside in the South.
2. The Deep South states have some of the highest levels of poverty in the United States;
3. Southern States experience extremely high levels of HIV-related stigma.

¹ Deep South refers to the following states: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and East Texas