



**WHITMAN-WALKER CLINIC®**

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## **WHITMAN-WALKER CLINIC COMMENDS OBAMA ADMINISTRATION FOR FIRST-EVER NATIONAL HIV/AIDS STRATEGY**

WASHINGTON – Whitman-Walker Clinic today commended the Obama Administration for the first-ever National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

“We are very encouraged by the thoughtful and comprehensive nature of the strategy and view this as an important call to action,” said Don Blanchon, Executive Director of Whitman-Walker Clinic. “It is a comprehensive yet common-sense plan that addresses the major underlying issues in our nation’s fight against HIV. It fully embraces the community reality that specific groups—most notably gay men and black Americans— are at a much greater risk for new infections and therefore warrant more attention. And it includes specific measurable outcomes that all stakeholders can be held accountable for—outcomes that were developed after considerable community input from across the country.”

“However, the success or failure of this strategy will depend on our nation’s ability to remain focused on this epidemic. The fight against HIV/AIDS is a marathon and not a sprint. Our challenge that we face is a virus that can outlast our increasingly shorter attention span.”

The National HIV/AIDS Strategy focuses on four areas: reducing new HIV infections, increasing access to care and improving health outcomes for people living with HIV, reducing HIV-related disparities and health inequities, and achieving a more coordinated national response to the HIV epidemic.

“Increasing access to care and improving health outcomes for people with HIV is an area where we have made considerable investments over the last four years,” said Blanchon.

- Our ‘Red Carpet’ service for people with HIV immediately links them to care after their diagnosis, allows them to establish a relationship with all of their care team on their first visit, and offers them access to a wide variety of care providers, from medical to dental to mental health.

- Our Medical Adherence team works with patients living with HIV to ensure they keep to their treatment regimen and to help them with any barriers to care, such as housing, transportation or access to food.”

“Our efforts to improve access to care have paid off tremendously,” said Blanchon. “Patient retention rates through Red Carpet exceed 90 percent. Nine of every 10 of our patients with HIV are on anti-retroviral treatment, compared with five out of every 10 in DC citywide. In addition, eight of every 10 of our HIV patients have suppressed viral loads, as opposed to the four out of every 10 in DC.”

“Reducing new HIV infections and reducing HIV-related disparities and health inequities are also areas where we are focusing,” said Blanchon.

“We continue to perform community outreach with the HIV prevention message, working to reach people in their communities, where they will be most receptive to hearing the message,” said Blanchon. “We continue to build new partnerships with area businesses, faith organizations and community partners to reach populations at great risk for HIV infection with not only prevention tools but testing and access to treatment if needed.”

“The National HIV/AIDS Strategy provides us with a very realistic and achievable plan in the domestic fight against HIV,” said Blanchon. “Now is the time to move from words to action.”

Established in 1978, Whitman-Walker Clinic is a non-profit, community-based provider of health care in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Through two sites in the District of Columbia, the Clinic offers primary medical and dental care; mental health and addictions counseling and treatment; HIV education, prevention, and testing; legal services; and medical adherence case management. Whitman-Walker Clinic is committed to meeting the health needs of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community and people living with HIV/AIDS.

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Obama Releases New Strategy to Combat HIV/AIDS (Fox5, 7-14-10)

<http://www.myfoxdc.com/dpp/mornings/obama-releases-new-strategy-to-combat-hiv-aids-071410>

Federal Government Unveils Plan To Fight HIV/AIDS (WAMU, 7-14-10)

<http://wamu.org/news/10/07/14.php#35857>

EE.UU. lanza campaña de concientización por VIH (teleSUR, 7-13-10)

<http://multimedia.telesurtv.net/14/7/2010/12333/eeuu-lanza-campana-de-concientizacion-por-vih/>

White House Focuses on HIV/AIDS (CNN, 7-13-10)

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/health/2010/07/13/lothian.wh.aids.strategy.cnn?iref=allsearch>