

July 3, 2012
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CAMBA LAUNCHES 2012 ANTI-STIGMA CAMPAIGN URGING COMPASSION FOR 27,000 BROOKLYNITES LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

BUS ADS AND SOCIAL MEDIA AIM TO END DISCRIMINATION, OPEN DISCUSSION AND ENCOURAGE BOROUGH RESIDENTS TO SEEK HIV/AIDS TESTING

Research shows that stigma and discrimination create emotional distress and isolation for people living with HIV/AIDS. Moreover, they discourage people who may be at risk from discussing the disease and seeking testing – which is especially critical as the number of people living with HIV grows.

The numbers are stark: In 2010, New York City reported that:

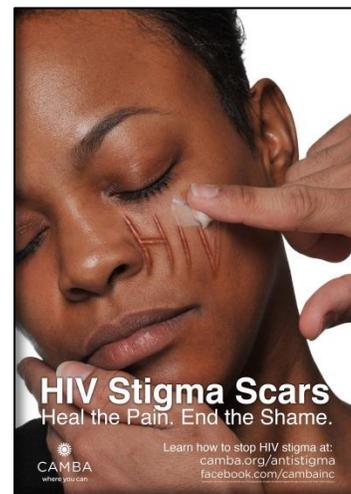
- 78.6% of new HIV/AIDS diagnoses were among blacks and Hispanics.
- Brooklyn and Manhattan led the city with the highest proportion of new diagnoses, and
- Brooklyn had the largest increase in newly diagnosed women.

“Stigma continues to deter people from talking about HIV, getting tested, and seeking care,” said Sharon Browne, CAMBA Deputy Executive Director. “With our marketing campaign, we encourage the community to ‘heal the pain and end the shame.’ Our goals are to create greater dialogue and awareness throughout Brooklyn.”

Developed in collaboration with the City’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene’s Bureau of HIV Prevention and Control, [CAMBA’s 2012 campaign](#) includes posters on Brooklyn buses and bus shelters, coupled with a social media marketing effort. The core message is: *“HIV Stigma Scars. Heal the Pain. End the Shame.”*

“It’s really painful to be treated like you have a mark of shame because you’re HIV positive,” said one of CAMBA’s peer counselors. “I want to be treated the same, whether you know I have HIV or not. People need to see that HIV stigma is not only hurting me, it’s hurting my community. I just want to live like everyone else.”

CAMBA’s campaign targets Central Brooklyn’s African-American, Afro-Caribbean, African and Latino communities, where HIV/AIDS rates are high but cultural attitudes may discourage acceptance and testing. The bus ads were designed by photographer John Labbe.



(More)

Social media is a unique component of CAMBA's anti-stigma campaign. In addition to [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) messages, CAMBA is inviting Brooklynites to check-in via Foursquare when they find a bus shelter ad and to converse via Twitter's #endHIVstigma hashtag.

In addition, CAMBA invites Brooklynites to share their own experiences with HIV-related discrimination by emailing michellem@camba.org. Stories will be posted on CAMBA's website, www.camba.org.

Can deep-rooted attitudes be swayed by a hashtag or a bus ad?

One woman who saw CAMBA's 2011 bus ad said it changed her: "I always thought of HIV as a punishment for undesirable behavior. But after seeing that ad about 'Put Yourself in the Shoes of Someone with HIV,' it made me think differently. What if it were me or someone in my family . . . I would hope that we would be treated with compassion and respect," she said.

CAMBA provides a wide range of services for individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS, including case management, prevention, training and education, counseling and supportive services, advocacy, and transitional and permanent housing. Together, these services enable clients with HIV to remain healthy and to achieve self-sufficiency.

In 2010, CAMBA:

- Helped more than 2,600 HIV-positive clients and their families with supportive services.
- Connected nearly 150 HIV-positive clients with medical care.
- Provided supportive housing to over 400 HIV-positive clients and their families.

About CAMBA

Started in 1977, CAMBA is a nonprofit agency that connects people with opportunities to enhance their quality of life. CAMBA offers integrated services and programs in: Economic Development, Education & Youth Development, Family Support Services, Health, Housing Services & Development and Legal Services. CAMBA serves more than 45,000 individuals and families, including 8,000 youth, each year. Learn more about CAMBA's life-changing services at www.camba.org.

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