



PRESS RELEASE



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Attention: Community Editors, Business, Health Care
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UNITY HEALTH CARE PARTNERS WITH BET'S AWARD-WINNING RAP-IT UP HIV/AIDS CAMPAIGN TO HOST A TEEN HEALTH FORUM AT TEMPLE OF PRAISE CHURCH

Washington DC – On Friday, May 2, 2008 Unity Health Care (Unity) and BET'S RAP-IT UP, the cable network's award-winning national HIV/AIDS public awareness initiative, brings their campaign to the teens and young adults in SE Washington, DC. The BET RAP-IT Up session begins at 7:00 pm at Temple of Praise Church located at 700 Southern Ave, SE Washington, DC.

"The teen health forum will help to equip our youth with tools to negotiation social issues, reduce the behaviors that place them at risk for exposure to HIV/AIDS, and help them make favorable life choices," said Elder Michael Wingard, Youth Minister for the Youth and Young Adult Ministry at Temple of Praise. "We are grateful for BET and Vikki Johnson, BET'S Manager of Public Affairs; this event is another effort by today's churches to dealing with social issues," added Wingard.

According to national estimates, approximately one-half of all new HIV infections in the United States occur among people under 25 years of age. Washington, DC faces the has the highest rate of AIDS of any major metropolitan area in the country, and national surveys show that many factors contribute to these staggeringly high rates of HIV among adolescents in the District of Columbia.

"Unity is proud to join forces with BET'S RAP-It Up and Temple of Praise," says Vince A. Keane, Unity's President and CEO. "HIV/AIDS touches every fabric of our community in the District of Columbia and will leave a footprint on the health of our community for generations. It will take the efforts of corporations and churches, such as BET and Temple of Praise; to help end HIV/AIDS in our lifetime," added Keane

Currently, Washington DC reports that three hundred and thirty-six (336) newly reported HIV cases among youth from 2001-2006, 86% were black. However, newly reported HIV cases among black youth showed an overall decline of 24%, from 56 cases in 2001 to 39 cases in 2006. "BET Networks is committed to raising awareness and addressing the social issues that contribute to the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS among the African-American community," stated Vikki Johnson, Manager of BET's Public Affairs. "Through our extensive public education campaign and community outreach such as this, we are able to effectively reach our viewers and hopefully eradicate the stigma and myths associated with this disease."

About Unity Health Care

Unity Health Care (Unity) provides health care to medically underserve in the District of Columbia, and is the largest provider of Ryan White Services (HIV/AIDS) in the District. Unity offering a full range of health services regardless of patients' ability to pay operates in more than 30 sites. In 2007, Unity provided care to more than 80,000 people who accessed services more than 433,000 times. For more information about Unity Health Care, Inc., visit our website www.unityhealthcare.org.

About BET's RAP-It-UP

Since 1997, the Kaiser Family Foundation and BET: Black Entertainment Television have partnered on an extensive public education campaign to inform young people about sexual health issues, including HIV/AIDS and other sexual-transmitted diseases(STDs). The partnership includes special programming, public services advertisements (PSAs), online content on bet.com, and a free resource and referral service. In 2000, the campaign launched a grassroots initiative to complement the on-air and online components of Rap-It-Up. Program elements include teen forums, mobile HIV Testing events and middle and high school curriculum on HIV/AIDS.