



February 1, 2010

**Statement to
The President's Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS (PACHA)**

**From UCAN,
The United Church of Christ HIV & AIDS Network (ucaninc.org)**

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Good morning:

My name is Bishop John Selders and I am an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. Today I am representing the United Church AIDS Network, also known as UCAN. Founded in 1987, UCAN's mission is to build a network of people, congregations and organizations within and beyond the United Church of Christ to respond to the U.S. and global AIDS pandemic through care giving, prevention interventions and advocacy efforts.

At this first meeting of the President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS of this new administration, we would like to acknowledge this as a kairos moment---- that is, a moment filled with opportunity, possibility and promise. This is a moment that must be grasped in order to mobilize our country's moral and political will, and human, organizational and financial resources to respond in strategic ways to the HIV/AIDS epidemic that continues to devastate so many communities, and take so many lives. If we fail to act, this moment will surely pass.

As we all know, every 9½ minutes another person in the United States will become infected with HIV. Before the general meeting of the Advisory Council is over, more than 15 Americans will become infected with HIV. This presents a challenge to all of us to work even more creatively and collaboratively. As a faith-based network, we are committed to bringing critical presence where it is needed most and working smarter and harder with others to realize a vision of health and wholeness for all. Having said that, the U.S. HIV epidemic demands leadership and commitment from the highest levels of government, although history has shown us that government cannot, nor should not, respond to this epidemic alone. Partnerships with community-based, faith-based and other organizations is even more critical if we are to reduce HIV incidence and respond to the needs of our neighbors, colleagues, relatives, church members and friends who are living with HIV/AIDS.

The mission is as urgent today as it ever has been. UCAN's challenge to the President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, a body of dedicated individuals, is that you work strategically in this current political environment to advance policies and programs that prevent new cases of HIV infection, provide universal access to treatment and offer compassionate care to people who are living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. And, lastly that, you intentionally solicit ongoing input from populations most at risk for HIV, and those organizations that serve them, to shape your thinking and strategies, and to make the most of this opportune moment.

UNITED CHURCH
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NETWORK