

## Call & Post Newspaper wins Tom Morgan Award for Excellence in HIV/AIDS Education

Written by Hazel Trice Edney NNPA Editor-in-Chief  
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NEW YORK (NNPA) - All across the country, African American communities are being devastated:

One in 16 Black men will be diagnosed with HIV this year; one in 30 Black women will be diagnosed with HIV; AIDS is the third leading cause of death for African American women age 25-34; and although Black people are only 12 percent of the U. S. population, they make up nearly half of all AIDS cases.

These are just a few of the confounding statistics articulated by Robert Bailey, a leader of the HIV/AIDS Prevention Partnerships Team at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. But, Bailey, speaking at the recent National Newspaper Publishers Association Annual Convention, also added that there is hope.

“There is hope amid the crisis because we have more opportunities than ever to stop this epidemic,” Bailey said, pointing to HIV/AIDS education and awareness as a key.

Bailey, speaking during a panel discussion, was at the conference – in part – to help award one of the more than 215 Black-owned newspapers with the Thomas Morgan III Award for HIV/AIDS Education. The \$2,500 award, jointly funded by the Atlanta-based CDC and the California-based Black AIDS Institute, was this year won by the *Cleveland Call & Post*, represented by Constance Harper, executive vice president and editor. The paper is published by boxing promoter Don King.

In its second year, the award is given to the participating NNPA member newspaper that does the best job educating its readership about the scourge of HIV/AIDS on Black America.

Harper’s newspaper won with an entry of three major HIV/AIDS supplements published last year. The award, received by the *Dallas Examiner* last year, was given at the beginning of the annual Merit Awards.

The Tom Morgan Award was named by Phill Wilson, an NNPA columnist and president and CEO of the BAI. Thomas Morgan III was a reporter and editor at the *New York Times* and served as the first openly gay president of the National Association of Black Journalists. He died

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at age 56 in Brooklyn, N.Y. from the complications caused by AIDS.

Incidentally, the award was given less than two weeks before National HIV Testing Day -Sunday, June 27.

The NNPA Foundation is one of 16 Black organizations chosen by the CDC and the Obama administration as part of a major HIV/AIDS education campaign, called Act Against AIDS Leadership Initiative. Bailey stressed that the Act Against AIDS campaign, announced last year within Obama's first 100 days, was the nation's first federally-funded HIV/AIDS media campaign in almost 20 years.

"But, the rate of HIV contractions among people who are Black is still unacceptable. The sad thing is that it is 100 percent preventable," said Bailey.

Although reductions are being seen in intravenous drug-users and transmissions from mothers to children, the crisis is still deeply embedded in the Black community.

This is the 30th anniversary of the first HIV infection, Bailey stressed; yet there are still 56,000 new infections each year. "Every nine-and-a-half minutes, someone in the U. S. – someone's, mother, father, brother, sister, cousin, uncle or aunt, is infected with HIV."