

Abstract Submission

- **NAME AND TITLE OF PRESENTER AND ORGANIZATION:** Vanessa Johnson, JD, National Coordinator, National Women and AIDS Collective (NWAC)
- **INDICATE TRACK UNDER WHICH YOU'D LIKE TO BE CONSIDERED:** 5. CHALLENGES. Specifically addressing strategies and methods for mentoring and training the next generation of women of color to fight HIV and be powerful change agents in their communities.
- **TITLE:** *Helping Women Understand HIV: The Results of a National HIV Health Literacy Project for HIV Workers at AIDS Service and Community Based Organizations who Serve Women Living with HIV*
- **OBJECTIVE:** Since the release of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy (NHAS), the nation has made gains in reducing new HIV infections for certain population groups, including women; however, in order to build upon this progress, women must continue to have access to effective, innovative gender-specific services. These services include access to women centered services and facilities, trauma-informed care, and services which address the underpinnings of HIV infection - poverty, discrimination and violence against women. Moreover, women need these services from a health literate and culturally competent workforce. Often times it is the front-line (greeters, receptionists) and community (outreach worker, educators, community health workers and case managers) of community-based HIV organizations that these women come in contact with first before seeing primary and specialty care staff. Their understanding of the science of HIV is critically important for both treatment and prevention. The objective of this workshop is to inform attendees of the critical importance of HIV-related health literacy and the role it can play in improving linkage and retention of women living with HIV in care and treatment.
- **METHODS:** This presentation will provide an overview of the project, along with a presentation of data from the 2015 series of webinars. Thereafter, the presenter will lead attendees through a brief assessment of HIV knowledge and a brief activity that will allow them to practice educating others about HIV. Finally attendees will receive a tool that will enable them to continue these educational sessions post-Summit attendance.
- **RESULTS:** The primary results of a national survey on the health literacy of the HIV workforce indicates much work needs to be done to strengthen the health literacy of the HIV workforce, especially at the community level. The primary objective outcomes of the NWAC HIV Health Literacy Project will demonstrate: 1) an increase in the level of knowledge about HIV prevention, care, treatment within the context of the HIV Care Continuum and 2) an increase in the level of knowledge about HIV vulnerabilities (i.e. structural factors, trauma, co-morbidities, and other health conditions) which may impede access and linkage to HIV prevention, care and treatment. The presenter will share both quantifiable qualitative data from the project.
- **CONCLUSIONS:** Attendees will become: 1) informed of two important HIV health literacy research studies: The 2013 Black AIDS Institute (BAI) study, in conjunction with NASTAD and the Latino Commission on AIDS as well as the 2015 NWAC HIV Health Literacy Project and 2) knowledge about the importance of HIV health literacy in helping women moving through the HIV Care Continuum.