White House Launches “Act Against AIDS” Campaign in U.S.

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President Barack Obama’s administration launched on April 7 a five-year, $45 million campaign to generate HIV/AIDS awareness in the United States, *The Washington Post* reports. The campaign, titled “Act Against AIDS,” will include public service announcements, text messages and advertising on public transportation as well as a web site, NineAndaHalfMinutes.org (the name refers to how frequently people are infected domestically).

“There is a complacency…a false sense of security and a false sense of calm,” said Kevin Fenton, director of the national center for HIV/AIDS at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). “Every 9-1/2 minutes, someone’s mother, someone’s daughter, someone’s father, someone’s friend is infected.”

According to Fenton, the campaign will focus initially on African Americans, which make up roughly 12 percent of the U.S. population but account for nearly half of new infections and nearly half of the HIV-positive population. A separate phase of the campaign will target Latinos, which account for 15 percent of the population and 17 percent of new infections.

Fenton added that the primary goal of the $9 million a year campaign “is to put the HIV epidemic on the front burner, on the radar screen.”

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