WE'RE INCREDIBLY PROUD OF THE WORK DONE BY NORTH CAROLINA AIDS ACTION NETWORK (NCAAN) IN 2020 TO CONTINUE FIGHTING FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV & HEPATITIS, EVEN UNDER THE CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES PRESENTED TO US VIA THE COVID PANDEMIC.

We kicked off 2020 by joining our partners at the Southern AIDS Coalition to host their annual Public Policy Committee Meeting in Charlotte, which helped to highlight some of the valuable work happening on the ground in Mecklenburg County and across North Carolina. We were also thrilled to welcome De’Shea Coney to our team to help lead our work in harm reduction and hepatitis advocacy.

And then the world changed. As executive director and board chair, we went from regular check-ins a couple times a month to almost daily conversations with each other and with the Executive Committee. We dealt with canceling events, ensuring we were financially strong, and thinking through how to support our staff, board, volunteers, and people living with HIV. The two of us reflected on the parallels between this moment in time and the start of the HIV epidemic, and all that could be learned from those past moments.

Our travel budget went way down, but our budget for postage went way up. We mailed ring lights to panelists, t-shirts to virtual conference participants, and NCAAN branded masks to our end-of-year donors. We had some fun on Facebook Live, including a virtual Broadway Twisted that featured some of our favorite performers from Playmakers Repertory Company in Chapel Hill and a conversation with Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary of North Carolina’s Department of Health and Human Services, on World AIDS Day about the important work of HIV advocacy in our state. And through it all, we still were able to host some masked up, social distance events in the fall, including seven socially distanced parties at the polls to help guarantee that elections across our state were safe and accessible.

We also felt moved to support and collaborate with partners working across NC to dismantle white supremacy. NCAAN staff and board members participated in numerous events to support the Black Lives Matter movement, and were proud to highlight leadership at partner organizations like Emancipate NC and the Durham Beyond Policing Coalition. We’ve got more work to do, and ongoing conversations are critical to work towards dismantling white supremacy within our organization, movement, and state.

Thank you for your support, and we hope you enjoy a snapshot of some of our work in 2020.

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Get Involved!  
Want to get involved with NCAAN? Fill out our volunteer form at http://www.ncaan.org/take-action/
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Just scan the code to the right and follow the steps. Your gift strengthens our statewide community of advocates fighting for the rights of people living with HIV or AIDS, their loved ones, and those at risk. Thank you!

It’s Easy To Donate!
As we entered election season in 2020, we were venturing into uncharted territory, one that our country and our Get Out the Vote efforts had never before experienced. In the midst of a disastrous pandemic, which has yet to abate, many folks were afraid to leave their homes. Voters across the country used mail-in/absentee ballots at unprecedented volumes, but local voting stations remained a critical venue for citizens to exercise their suffrage. With the support of Blueprint NC’s “Power, Protection, and Encouragement at the Polls” program, NC AIDS Action Network and many ally organizations hosted hundreds of parties at the polls to ensure safe and fair elections for voters throughout North Carolina.

The North Carolina AIDS Action Network created the Hepatitis Ambassadors for Change Program in June 2020 and empowered champions of Hepatitis C and harm reduction through formal trainings, education, resource networking, and advocacy. Although a greater need for harm reduction and Hepatitis C providers exist in the western part of the state, the Hepatitis Ambassadors for Change come from all parts of the state, providing insight on disparities affecting central and eastern regions, as well as major metropolitan areas, suburbs, and rural communities.

The Hepatitis Ambassadors for Change program was created to be a network for resource and knowledge sharing. These regular trainings ensure that the information shared is up to date and that community leaders are effectively informed. Trainings engage essential and difficult topics, such as Overdose Reversal, Hepatitis C treatment & linkage to Hepatitis C treatment, and peer/community engagement imbued with empathy and compassion.

The Hepatitis Ambassadors for Change are also equipped with tools that enable access into various forms of advocacy, including storytelling, techniques to engage policymakers, and group-led community activation. The Hepatitis Ambassadors for Change program operates with an advocacy focus, engaging and activating community leaders when policies are introduced that threaten the health and livelihood of people living with Hepatitis C and people who use drugs. Although having existed for only 6 months by the end of 2020, the Hepatitis Ambassadors for Change made waves with the creation of a Public Service Announcement video on the gravity of Hepatitis C in North Carolina and advocacy engagement by supporting the state’s harm reduction agencies against House Bill 918.

Party at the Polls

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In October and November of 2020, the NCAAN team – in collaboration with the LGBT Center of Raleigh, VAE Raleigh, and R.O.L.E. Models – hosted seven Parties at the Polls in Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Charlotte. Food, games, music, giveaways, caricature artists and drag performances truly made 2020 the most exciting voting experience folks had ever had. Apart from providing a fun platform for voter engagement, these parties also served as a way for staff and volunteers to ensure that folks were able to vote without fear and intimidation. 2020 was a rough year with a lot of uncertainty and unrest, so we were grateful to be able show up for our communities across North Carolina and make sure that their rights to safe and fair elections were upheld.

ABOVE: Staff and Volunteers from our partnership with the LGBT Center of Raleigh were big fans of the world’s largest “I Voted” sticker.
At the onset of the pandemic, the NCAAN team recognized the importance of staying engaged with our communities across the state, providing essential information, while also keeping folks safe at home. After some internal brainstorming, we reached out to our colleagues and friends at Latinos in the South to gauge their interest in partnering to host weekly webinars on various HIV and HIV-parallel community topics. Over the course of Spring and Summer 2020, our two teams co-hosted over 25 different webinars, reaching folks across our state and beyond.

Webinar topics ranged the gamut: from “Immigrant Rights” to “Defunding the Police” to “Molecular Surveillance” and “HIV Criminalization” and kept us all looped into important discussions and notable trends in the movement. Our webinars became a space for community members across the state to see each other almost weekly, share updates, and stay engaged with partners and organizations across the nation. Having this partnership was critical to helping us feel connected with colleagues and grounded in our mission during this time.

Though the pandemic kept us away from each other physically, we are grateful to Latinos in the South for working with us throughout the year to keep folks together virtually.

2020 PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT:

Latino Commission on AIDS

2020 BY THE NUMBERS

1,669
Number of Tweets in 2020

4,539
# of Facebook Live viewers in 2020

140
# of Building Power Across the Spectrum 2020 attendees

20
# of Webinars held (about COVID, Voting and Politics, Advocacy, and Healthcare)

86
# of virtual attendees who met with legislators at HIV Speaks on Jones Street
It is no secret that in 2020, everything changed.

We pivoted to doing the bulk of our work virtually, and learned that virtual advocacy can also make a huge difference. In fact, in many cases legislators can actually be more accessible in a virtual world, and people from different parts of the state can come together more easily. In 2020 our focus became connecting people around our mission, so our team hosted 20+ webinars covering a wide range of topics that impact the HIV community. As our “Partnership Spotlight” page details, this weekly webinar series was hosted in collaboration with our friends at Latinos in the South.

We hosted our annual advocacy day “HIV (Virtually) Speaks on Jones St.” Even in such wild times, we still had 86 attendees and conducted 10 virtual meetings with various NC policy makers. NCAAN staff hosted seven “Safe Sites: Power, Protection, and Encouragement at the Polls Parties” with the support of Blueprint NC. We also called 1000 “low propensity” voters across NC and sent 1500 text messages (with 6.3% engagement rate), helping 157 folks across the state create their voting plans.

On World AIDS Day 2020, NCAAN delivered our #PrEPWorks petition to Dr. Mandy Cohen, the Secretary of NC Department of Health and Human Services, and to several key House Health Members at the NCGA, with 626 signatures advocating for expanded access to PrEP and PEP services.
About NCAAN

OUR MISSION

To improve the lives of people living with HIV & AIDS and affected communities through outreach and public education, policy advocacy, and community-building to increase visibility and mutual support of people living with HIV & AIDS throughout our state.

OUR VISION

The North Carolina AIDS Action Network envisions a state that values the voices, knowledge, and life experiences of people living with HIV & AIDS – where HIV education and healthcare are accessible, fact-based, compassionate, and without moral judgment; and where people living with HIV & AIDS live in a community of mutual support and are treated as whole individuals worthy of love, respect, and dignity.

We are committed to building HIV & AIDS and Viral Hepatitis advocacy capacity at the grassroots by inviting every North Carolinian who cares about health equity to join our Action Team. **Join us at NCAAN.org**