



## **Black AIDS Awareness Day Recognized**

By [Jason Freeman](#)

---

Black AIDS Institute announces new findings and reports in radio press conference

Chicago, IL - The Black AIDS Institute, the nation's only HIV/AIDS think tank focused exclusively on the Black community, announced findings from its 2008 "State of AIDS in Black America" report at a press conference this morning, Thursday February 7.

Phill Wilson, founder and executive director of the Black AIDS Institute, was joined by Rev. Al Sharpton, actor Hill Harper, actress Jurnee Smollett, and entrepreneurs Danny Bakewell Sr. and Danny Bakewell Jr. in announcing "The Institute's" 2008 report at Stevie Wonder's radio station, KJLH in Inglewood, CA. The report detailed new findings and statistics about AIDS in the Black community.

"Black America has come a long way with the fight to eradicate the AIDS epidemic but the fight is long from being over," Wilson says to ChicagoPride.com "AIDS in America today is a Black disease. Nobody wants to talk about that. Nobody wants to own that. The statistics are staggering. Nearly 50% of the estimated 1.2 million Americans living with HIV/AIDS today are Black. Blacks account for 54% of the newly infected cases; 64 percent of newly infected women are Black; and 70 percent of newly infected teens are of Black. The time to act, the time to discuss and the time to educate is now. Our brother and sisters are dying of a disease that is 100% preventable and treatable. We can no longer ignore our community and this horrific problem. We can't not wait."

Tonight, at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, The Institute will host its annual Heroes in the Struggle award ceremony, where key Black leaders in politics, religion, business and entertainment will be honored for their work in combating the Black AIDS epidemic.

For its annual Heroes in the Struggle award ceremony, the Black AIDS Institute will honor people of African descent who have helped propel the movement forward in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The night will feature a VIP reception, silent auction and live entertainment, including dance performances by Desmond Richardson and Sarita Allen; and music by renowned harpist, Destiny. The evening's award honorees are entrepreneur Danny Bakewell and The Blackwell Group; Julian Bond, chairman of the NAACP; The Honorable Yvonne B. Burke; journalist and activist George E. Curry; actor Hill Harper; Bishop Thomas Dexter (T.D.) Jakes, Sr.; activist Jesse Milan, Jr., JD; The Honorable Charles B. Rangel; media personality Tavis Smiley; and actress Jurnee Smollett. [www.blackaids.org](http://www.blackaids.org)