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Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine Honors C. Virginia Fields on National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

Former Manhattan Borough President Says Medical Students Can Play a Pivotal Role in Prevention and Treatment

New York, N.Y. - February 8, 2012 – [Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine](http://www.touro.edu) (TouroCOM) honored former Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields, president & CEO of the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc. (NBCLA), at an event hosted yesterday at the Harlem medical school in commemoration of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

Ms. Fields was presented with a proclamation from the New York City Council as well as an award from TouroCOM for her leadership in fighting HIV infection and AIDS through her leadership of the NBLCA.

In the United States, where the epidemic began in 1981, more than 1 million individuals are living with HIV/AIDS with approximately 28 percent unaware of their infection. African-Americans are most affected.

“On behalf of the city and of TouroCOM, we are extremely proud to recognize the hard work and dedication Ms. Fields has demonstrated in raising awareness of HIV infection and AIDS and paths to treatment and prevention,” said Robert Goldberg, D.O., dean of TouroCOM. “As millions fight this epidemic worldwide, including many in our own community in Harlem, it is a privilege on this national day of awareness to extend our gratitude and in so doing, further educate our community about what needs to be done to stem this crisis.”

Ms. Fields was one of several community leaders and TouroCOM faculty members who addressed a gathering of medical school students, staff and community members about HIV/AIDS and the importance of education, testing, and treatment.

In expressing her gratitude, Ms. Fields spoke directly to the students in the audience, reminding them that they can play a crucial role in reducing HIV/AIDS as they enter the workforce.

“Patients will listen when there is trust and when they believe you have their best interests at heart. We need you as students and instructors to raise the conversation even if they don’t,” Ms.

Fields said. “You’re in a pivotal position to help patients know how to remain [HIV] negative and what to do if they are positive. We need everybody in this fight.”

Esquire Anthony, D.O., an instructor in primary care at TouroCOM, presented an overview of the crisis with statistics from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) showing that HIV infection/AIDS is a global pandemic with cases reported from virtually every country in the world. In 2009, the latest year for which data is available, 33.3 million were living with HIV - 95 percent of whom were residing in low and middle-income countries, 50 percent of whom were female, and 2.5 million of whom were children under 15 years of age. In 2009, 2.6 million people became newly infected and 1.8 million deaths were attributed to HIV/AIDS, according to the data presented.

According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the city is home to the largest number of persons living with HIV/AIDS in the U.S., with 110,000 New Yorkers known to be living with HIV/AIDS. There are also an estimated 21 percent additional HIV positive New Yorkers who are not aware of their status and could be unknowingly transmitting the virus to others, according to the city, which says black New Yorkers, who make up 25 percent of the city’s population, comprise the greatest proportion of residents living with HIV/AIDS, at 45 percent.

The Health Department announced yesterday that new HIV data shows a 41 percent drop in deaths among black persons living with HIV/AIDS between 2001 and 2010. Still, blacks disproportionately accounted for almost half of all new HIV diagnoses in 2010, a figure the city said has remained almost unchanged for the past five years.

TouroCOM advances the osteopathic profession and serves its students and society by providing a firm educational foundation that encourages research and scholarly activity and participation in community service. Osteopathic medicine is a distinct form of medical practice in the U.S. that provides all of the benefits of modern medicine including prescription drugs, surgery, and the use of technology to diagnose disease and evaluate injury. It also offers the added benefit of hands-on diagnosis and treatment through a system of therapy known as osteopathic manipulative medicine.

TouroCOM functions as an integral part of the New York City/Harlem community, working with local schools and other colleges and universities to promote the study of medicine, encourage continuing development, increase educational opportunities and deliver medical services in a variety of community settings. In addition to its focus on primary care, the College emphasizes the promotion of wellness from prenatal through geriatric care. For further information visit: <http://www.touro.edu/med/>



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*Touro is a system of Jewish-sponsored non-profit institutions of higher and professional education. Touro College was established in 1971 primarily to enrich the Jewish heritage, and to serve the larger American community. More than 18,000 students are currently enrolled in its various schools and divisions. Touro College has branch campuses, locations and instructional sites in the New York area, as well as branch campuses and programs in Berlin, Jerusalem, Moscow, Paris, and Florida. Touro University California and its Nevada branch campus, as well as Touro College Los Angeles, are separately accredited institutions governed in common by the same Board of Trustees as Touro College. For further information on Touro College, please go to: <http://www.touro.edu/media/>.
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