March 10, 2020 -- In observance of today’s National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NWGHAAD), ACT NOW: END AIDS (ANEA), calls on every 2020 Presidential candidate to actively include input from women and girls living with and vulnerable to HIV and AIDS in all plans and policies to address and end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States. According to the CDC, in 2017, women comprised nearly a quarter of all people living with HIV and 19% of new diagnoses in the U.S, with Black women accounting for 59% percent of new diagnoses among women. An estimated 14% of all transgender women in the U.S. are living with HIV.

“To end the HIV epidemic, it is critical that prospective presidential candidates meet with women and girls living with HIV to ensure their platform addresses more than biomedical interventions, but also structural and policy barriers that limit access to health care and services for low-income communities, LGBTQ+ people and Black, Indigenous, and people of color,” said Venita Ray, Deputy Director of Positive Women's Network-USA.

Sponsored by the Office on Women’s Health of the Department of Health and Human Services, NWGHAAD was founded to highlight the needs of women and girls living with HIV and celebrate their leadership in the HIV advocacy movement. This year’s theme, “HIV Prevention Starts With Me: Ending the Epidemic Together,” highlights the importance of domestic plans driven by the experiences of women and girls living with or vulnerable to HIV.

“The disparities seen in HIV diagnoses are the direct result of elected officials and health departments not making a concerted effort to engage with a broad and intersectional coalition of HIV/AIDS community members,” said Kiki Hackett, Director of National Community Mobilization, Housing Works. “Poverty, lack of access to healthcare and stigma are the drivers of these disparities, not significant differences in behavior. We will only reach the end of the epidemic in the U.S. when the voices of Black women, transgender women and other systematically neglected communities are truly heard.”

ANEA commits to holding prospective presidential candidates and campaigns accountable to policy and political positions or promises on HIV, or related communities impacted by HIV, and ensuring reflection of HIV community priorities in their respective platforms.

Disclaimer: The content of this statement does not express the views of all members of the Act Now: End AIDS coalition or our government partners.

About ACT NOW:END AIDS (ANEA)
ANEA is a national coalition of community-based organizations, health departments, and national organizations committed to ending AIDS as an epidemic in the United States. Since its inception, ANEA has engaged with candidates to help shape and implement an HIV platform that meets the needs of the community.