

Good afternoon my name is Karen Blanton and I am the Chairperson for the Community Advisory Board at the DHHS 2000 Dennis Avenue in Silver Spring MD. I'm here to ask the Council for their support in helping us continue this important work. When we organized this board over two years ago we were given a stipend and since November of last year our funding was cut. Many of my constituents still face barriers to care, persistent stigma, housing instability, and gaps in culturally responsive support, I have spent decades walking alongside individuals and families navigating not just treatment, but the real life challenges that come with an HIV diagnosis, While medical advances have transformed HIV into a manageable condition for many including myself and a child that was born positive, equitable access to community centered support has not reached everyone. We bring lived expertise, trusted community relationships and more the three decades of advocacy

We want to strengthen collaboration with the Montgomery County Health and Human Services and help the county move closer to ending the HIV epidemic locally. We have had two program directors quit since starting the CAB for reasons I'm not sure of, but it has slowed down our progress. With the County Council's partnership we can expand outreach, improve engagement with those most impacted, and build sustainable, community led solutions. I respectfully ask for your support in advancing this most important work. I would like to thank the CAI for helping me get the opportunity to speak with a Pro-bono Lawyer, but at this time the CAB is in no position to become a Non-Profit.p

Thank You Very Much For Your Attention To This Matter!

Available Tuesdays and Fridays



# Community Advisory Board

**Advocacy, Accountability, and Action** for People Living with HIV in Montgomery County



## Our Mission

To advise, advocate, and influence local programs and policies to ensure they meet the real needs of the community, with transparency, accountability, and respect.

## Goals with County Funding

- 1 Conduct **County-Wide Listening Sessions**
- 2 Develop **Recommendations** for Local HIV Programs & Policies
- 3 **Compensate** Community Members for Participation
- 4 Strengthen **Partnerships** with Health Providers & Nonprofits

## About Us

- Founded by members of the Sexual Health and Wellness Program
- Rooted in Lived Experience of People Infected & Affected by HIV
- Actively Seeking to File an Article of incorporation

## Contact:

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## Why Support Us?

- **Structured, Sustainable Voice** for People Living with HIV
- Ensures **Programs** Reflect Community Priorities
- **Reduces Stigma** & Improves Access to Care