

Testimony Appropriations Committee

Trina P. Barnes

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Good afternoon Senator Harp, Representative Walker, members of the committee. My name is Trina Barnes and I am the Grants Manager with GBAPP, Inc. a non profit agency based in Bridgeport "Building a Healthier Community through education, collaboration and intervention". GBAPP serves the cities and towns of Bridgeport, Easton, Monroe, Stratford, Fairfield, and Trumbull.

We are very concerned about proposed cuts to prevention in the Governor's budget. And while we understand and acknowledge that we as a state have a financial crisis and that everyone needs to share the financial burden. Prevention is the foundation for building and maintaining a healthy community.

Substantial Prevention funding is critical if we are serious about reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases in communities of color.

GBAPP sees both ends of the continuum. We provide prevention services and we provide services for people who are living with HIV/AIDS and teen mothers and fathers.

Sisters and Brothers Prevention Project uses (an) evidence based model to discuss sexual issues/concerns, educate participants that may be or know individuals that are HIV positive on where to obtain the necessary services crucial to their well-being and continued good health. I would like to share some feedback from our most recent group:

- The group was very informative. I just wish I could have been here before I started have sex...
- I began to view myself in a whole new light as an African American woman. I realized my work, my personal values and how to keep them in order according to my life.
- The information was helpful and encouraged me to be more aware of my decision making and insight on my views of life.
- I now have sex with condoms.

We recently co-hosted a women's conference in recognition of National Black HIV Awareness Day and the survey responses to what age were you exposed to sex education and who taught you about were disturbing:

- No one talked to me about sex
- I was a teen already
- I learned when I had a baby

Thank you for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.