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Meeting with Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, New York, Thursday, September 9, 1993

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FILE

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 16, 1993

MEMORANDUM

To: Carol Rasco

From: Kristine Gebbie

Subject: Meeting with Black Leadership Commission on AIDS
New York City, Thursday, Sept. 9, 1993

The meeting with the Black Leadership Coalition on AIDS (BLCOA) in New York City was a very useful forum for exploring concerns in the African-American community regarding response to the HIV epidemic, and ways in which the Administration can support a more vigorous effort. I identified three particular areas for follow up from this office:

1. The group has developed a plan to replicate their grass-roots approach in an addition 15 or more cities. They would like to receive financial support for this work. I will share the materials they provided me with HHS, to see if there is any end-of-fiscal-year money available as seed money for this project. Failing that, I will assure that they are fully informed about any sources of FY94 funding which might apply. As I meet with private funders, I will also share information about this project.
2. The group is concerned that African-American efforts have not been appropriately recognized, and that African-Americans have not be appropriately included in all decision-making processes. They were quick to point out that the Ryan White planning process in NYC has gone well, and an assistant commissioner of the City Department of Health was present during the meeting, which affirms this good relationship. Nonetheless, they are right that we have been far from stellar across the country in working with communities of color, and this will be a focal point of my office.
3. The group specifically identified a lack of connection between the BLCOA, which is our major tie to the business community and to national unions, and the African-American community. I have already followed up with BJ Stiles and others at the Leadership Coalition, to close the gap. I have extended my expression of concern to include the need for similar outreach to the Hispanic and Asian communities as well.

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RASCO MEMORANDUM

I should also add a comment on the connection to the churches. I was able to meet briefly with a couple of the leaders of the National Baptist Convention. That group has committed itself to work with the BLCOA, a major step in acknowledgement by the church that the response to HIV needs the leadership of the religious community. This is a connection which must be made with all denominations, across all racial and ethnic groups. The Surgeon General and I have already shared several ideas on how to encourage this sort of tie, and I am glad to have one current, excellent example to use in our brainstorming.

Susan Johnson Cook was also in attendance, and probably has other observations which expand on these. I would be happy to provide you with additional information if you wish. Thank you.