

## **Moving Mountains: Engaging Faith Communities to Address the Three Primary Goals for the National HIV/AIDS Strategy**

**Investigator:** Minister Rob Newells

The CDC, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, and the President of the United States all recognize the faith community's influence on knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about health. Engaging faith communities in HIV prevention is still a challenge, particularly among black churches. With the shift towards targeted, high-impact combination HIV prevention strategies and pending implementation of the Affordable Care Act, communities must prepare to provide more services with limited dollars.

Using the three primary goals of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and the HIV/AIDS treatment cascade as guides, Healing Faith offers practical strategies for engaging faith communities in HIV prevention efforts for their congregations and neighborhoods. Specific responses related to each of the NHAS goals will be presented, and additional strategies will be explored through group discussion and interactive brainstorming activities: 1) what can churches do to help increase the percentage of people living with HIV who know their serostatus?; 2) what can churches do to help increase the percentage of HIV-diagnosed people who are in continuous care?; what can churches do to help increase the proportion of HIV-diagnosed people with undetectable viral load?

Participants will better understand how to use the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and the HIV/AIDS treatment cascade as tools to effectively engage faith communities in HIV prevention activities. Actionable community-specific plans will be developed for local implementation based on theological imperatives focused on ethics, morals, and social justice. Local organizations will be better prepared to engage faith communities to support the spiritual needs of existing clients and to become community resources for HIV testing, prevention and treatment information. Faith communities will be better prepared to collaborate with local organizations and health departments on efforts to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in their communities. Increased engagement of local faith communities will result in more people knowing their serostatus, more people living with HIV who are retained in treatment, and more people living with HIV who achieve viral suppression.