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PRESS RELEASE

HIV – FROM THE BOTTOM TO THE TOP

New campaign highlights HIV risks to Black men who 'top' without condoms.

LONDON, 25 March 2009 – Big Up, the Black gay men's project at GMFA, is launching a new advertising campaign focussing on the risk of HIV for Black gay men who are insertive during unprotected anal sex. The campaign follows research showing Black gay men are less likely to use condoms when they are the 'top' than guys from other ethnic groups.

"It's more risky being the receptive partner during anal sex without condoms," said Jaime Sylla, Project Manager for Big Up "but that doesn't mean tops aren't at risk. Black guys more commonly think that being a top protects them. The truth is, lots of guys get HIV while being insertive without condoms. It's worth reminding guys of the risks of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections too."

Gay men use a variety of approaches to minimise the risk of HIV but sometimes we don't have all the facts. That's why the Big Up group decided to dispel the myth that being a top during unprotected anal sex

can protect you. Data from the Gay Men Sex Survey 2006 showed that 55.3% of black gay men had engaged in unprotected anal sex. Compared to the ethnic majority, black men were 2.76 times as likely to have IUA1 with men they knew to be positive¹.

The campaign is sexy without being crude. It features two Black guys getting down to action, with the headline 'HIV – From the Bottom to the Top'. The graphic elements clearly establish the route of transmission.

"Using condoms can prevent the transmission of HIV from the top to the bottom or from the bottom to the top," said Matthew Hodson, Head of programmes for GMFA. "Both partners should be able to take the responsibility to protect themselves or their partners."

- Ends -

If more information about this or any other of GMFA's campaigns and actions is required,

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Notes to editor:

About GMFA:

GMFA was established in 1992 and is the UK's leading charity dedicated to gay men's health. GMFA's mission is to improve gay men's health by increasing the control they have over their own lives. We believe that the best health promotion for gay men comes from gay men themselves, and so we use the knowledge and ideas of our 170 volunteers (most of them gay men) to design and plan our

¹ HIV, sexual risk, and ethnicity among men in England who have sex with men. F Hickson, D Reid, P Weatherburn, M Stephens, W Nutland, P Boakye.

thought provoking sexual health interventions. We have received international acclaim for our Sex and Sexual Health website (www.gmfa.org.uk/sex). Our other websites include a detailed listing of sexual health services available for gay men in London (www.gmfa.org.uk/londonservices), an information resource for HIV positive gay men (www.gmfa.org.uk/positive) and a guide to gay sports and social groups in London (www.gmfa.org.uk/theguide). All of our sites can be accessed at www.gmfa.org.uk. GMFA produce a range of advertising campaigns, leaflets, postcards and booklets. Independent surveys have concluded that our campaigns reach up to 60% of the London gay population and we are the most reliable agency at reaching gay men. In addition to this we distribute our own health magazine, FS, free to London's gay bars and clubs to further educate gay men about relationships, their bodies, general health and STIs. Over the last fourteen years we have provided courses for over 10,000 gay men, providing safer sex education, life skills and stop smoking courses. We currently provide a range of groupwork interventions across England and Wales. GMFA has Big Lottery funding to create sexual health interventions for Black gay men in London.