

## Legislation Text

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Recognizing February 7, 2021 as National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and honoring the work of Bebashi in providing access to culturally sensitive high-quality healthcare, HIV/AIDS services, health education, and social services.

WHEREAS, The first National Black HIV/AIDS was recognized in 1999 as a grassroots educational effort to raise awareness around HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment in communities of color; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that 30,000 people live with HIV in the Greater Philadelphia Region. Philadelphians are additionally being affected by HIV at a rate five times the national average and 50% higher than residents of New York City; and

WHEREAS, In 2018, Black Americans represented 43% of all new HIV cases, yet only made up 13% of the US population. In 2016, Black women in the United States were diagnosed with HIV at a higher rate than White women. In the Northeast, diagnoses were 21.9 times higher for Black women. Between 2014 and 2018, HIV cases increased by 12.3% among Black gay and bisexual men; and

WHEREAS, Despite advances in medication and treatment for people infected with HIV/AIDS, there is no cure. Public health officials warn against the dangers of no longer treating HIV as a serious threat, as this perception has led to increased infection rates in the US; and

WHEREAS, Bebashi - Transition to Hope was founded in 1985 as a full-service HIV/AIDS organization with a special interest in serving low-income people of color with HIV disease. As the second-oldest AIDS service organization in the Philadelphia region, Bebashi was the first African-American organization in the United States to address the AIDS crisis. It remains one of Philadelphia's largest community-based minority providers of HIV/AIDS education and services for the urban community; and

WHEREAS, Bebashi's purpose is to empower people to enhance the quality of their health and overall well-being by providing access to culturally sensitive high quality healthcare; and

WHEREAS, Bebashi offers free at-home HIV testing kits; free and confidential HIV/AIDS, STI, and pregnancy testing; an extensive prevention education program; community resources on safe sex, preventative measures, and treatment; and free breast cancer screening and mammograms; and

WHEREAS, Bebashi's FoodFirst Food Pantry provides nutritious food for low-income individuals and families. Bebashi's HYPE program provides monthly KiKi lounges to celebrate the Philadelphia ballroom community and a safe haven for the LGBTQAI community; and

WHEREAS, In 2020, Bebashi was named a 2020 Champion in Action in the category of Inclusion & Equality. The award was announced jointly by Citizens Bank, NBC10/Telemundo62, and The Philadelphia Inquirer; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, Bebashi participated in WURD's The Lounge in a post-National Black HIV/AIDS

Awareness Day discussion on Philadelphia's staggering infection rate numbers and how to educate our community on prevention and treatment; and

WHEREAS, Even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, National Black HIV/AIDS provides a unique opportunity to increase testing, education, treatment options, and community engagement in Philadelphia around HIV/AIDS prevention; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby recognizes February 7, 2021 as National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day and honors the work of Bebashi in providing access to culturally sensitive high-quality healthcare, HIV/AIDS services, health education, and social services.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy be presented to Bebashi, further evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.