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CONTACTS:

Alejandro Acosta, Comunicaciones

alejandros@equalityflorida.org

1- (954)-9802758

María Mejías, Comunicaciones

mariahiv1111@yahoo.com

1- (786)- 985-4722

***Latinx Leaders Announce LatinX+
A New National PLHIV Network***

MIAMI -- A group of LatinX leaders living with HIV from across the U.S. and Puerto Rico have announced the formation of **LatinX+**, a new national Latinx PLHIV network. The new network is designed to enable Latinx PLHIV from across the U.S. to define their own agenda, select and hold accountable leadership of their own choosing and to speak with a collective voice on issues of concern to Latinx PLHIV.

"For too long the decisions that affect our community have been left in the hands of those that do not represent us, are not part of our community, and in turn cannot speak from experience or have our best interest in mind when making decisions that can have life-altering consequences for us, we want to be in charge of creating our own agenda," said Yolanda Diaz, one of the co-founders of **LatinX+** who is also a founding member of PWN - USA.

Earlier this year, fourteen advocates from across the nation gathered at a two-day strategic planning meeting in Milford, PA, to create change and be heard. The diverse group hailed from different parts of the US and PR with numerous Latin American

countries represented by birth or heritage.” *It was important to have representation from the most impacted populations as well as all spectrums of sexual orientations and gender identities,*” said Ashley Figueroa, also a **LatinX+** co-founder who is Project Manager at Orlando’s Bliss Cares.

The two-day gathering was supported by Sero Project, a U.S.-based network of PLHIV combating HIV criminalization and promoting PLHIV self-empowerment, and Equality Florida, that state’s largest civil rights organization dedicated to securing full equality for Florida’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community.

Gonzalo Aburto, who coordinates the Sero Project’s work in Latinx communities, commenting on the new network, *“We must never forget that the roots of the AIDS activist movement included powerful and fierce Latinx advocates like Sylvia Rivera, Pedro Zamora and others who have been drowned and forgotten by mainstream histories. We need to make sure we create a new narrative when it comes to HIV. The status quo is no longer acceptable.”* he said

Alejandro Acosta, Equality Florida’s HIV Advocacy Project Coordinator, noted that the new network’s work will include advocacy to end HIV criminalization. *“Modernizing HIV criminalization statutes to reflect current prevention and transmission science is critical to slowing HIV transmission. In Florida, a person with HIV can be sentenced to up to 30 years in jail, even in circumstances where HIV transmission was impossible. This stigmatization prevents people from getting tested and seeking early treatment, which saves lives.”*

For more information on LatinX+ please send an email to:

Latinxplus@gmail.com