



Paul Kawata
NMAC Executive Director

Since 1989, Paul Akio Kawata has served as executive director of the National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), the premier organization dedicated to building leadership in communities of color to address the challenges of HIV/AIDS. Under Kawata's direction, NMAC implemented the first HIV treatment education programs in the United States targeted to minorities, and increased its membership from 300 to more than 3,000 agencies and groups.

Kawata provides strategic direction of the organization's administrative, fiscal management and fundraising infrastructure, and oversees its training, technical assistance, education, and national advocacy programs and initiatives. In addition, he conceived and developed the organization's high-profile meetings, including the United States Conference on AIDS (USCA), currently the largest annual AIDS-related gathering in the country, as well as the HIV Prevention Leadership Summit (The Summit) (formerly known as the Community Planning Leadership Summit) and the National AIDS Treatment Action Forum (NATAF).

Due to Kawata's efforts, NMAC has developed a range of international linkages and partnerships, and facilitated the first international HIV/AIDS conference, in South Africa. Kawata has helped integrate NMAC's work with that of general minority health and human service initiatives, developing significant program collaborations with national and regional lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender (LGBT), women's, African-American, Latino, Asian-Pacific Islander, and Native American advocacy, service and professional organizations.

A leading HIV/AIDS advocate, Kawata has represented NMAC in many of the most significant legislative achievements in the fight against the epidemic. These include the passage and renewal of the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act; the Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and the Congressional Black Caucus/Congressional Hispanic Caucus expansion of federal funding for HIV/AIDS programs in communities of color.

Kawata currently is a member of the board of the Collin Higgins Foundation and of the Management Assistance Group. He was a founding board member of the National Association of People with MDS and the National AIDS Fund. He has received numerous awards recognizing his leadership in the field of AIDS advocacy, including both the Surgeon General's Award and the ATR Wellness Project Leadership Award in 2000. Other honors include the Japanese American Citizen's League Citizen of the Biennium in 1999, the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association Award for Person of the Year in 1998, the HealthWatch Award for Outstanding Leadership in Minority Health in 1996, the Keys to the City from the City of New Orleans in 1996, and the Michael Hirsch Award in 1990.

Prior to NMAC, Kawata served from 1985 to 1989 as founding executive director of the National AIDS Network, the first national organization dedicated to developing the capability of community-based leaders in the fight against AIDS. During his tenure, he planned and implemented three consecutive, annual National Skills Building Conferences—the first of their

kind in the world—and recruited the Ad Council to work on the first national HIV/AIDS public service campaign. He also organized and supported the National AIDS Fund, the single largest private philanthropic partnership in the history of the epidemic.

Kawata began his professional career in 1983 in Seattle as a staff liaison in the Office of the Mayor. During his tenure, he developed relationships between the Mayor's Office and official city commissions representing various LBGT, women's, and minority constituency groups. These commissions initiated the first comprehensive HIV/AIDS policies adopted by a major U.S. city.

Kawata graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a B.A. from the University of the Pacific in Los Angeles. He has an M.A. in urban planning from Antioch University.