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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Southern AIDS Coalition set to release *Southern States Manifesto: Update 2012* at International AIDS Conference

BIRMINGHAM, AL, July 18, 2012 – A new report prepared by the Southern AIDS Coalition (SAC) is scheduled for release at *Shine the Light!* on July 23, 2012. Guests will gather at the Woolly Mammoth Theatre, just half a mile south of the Washington Convention Center, where more than 25,000 service providers, advocates, policy makers, and researchers will be convened for the International AIDS Conference 2012 (IAC). This year's conference is the first time in more than 20 years that the IAC will be held in the United States, and the venue offers unique opportunities to focus attention on the nature and scope of the HIV epidemic in the American South.

The event, hosted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) with the support from the MAC AIDS Fund, will consist of a special evening of reflection, discussion, and engagement that will shine the light on the state of HIV/AIDS in the southern United States. *Shine the Light!* guests will witness *deepsouth*, a poignant new documentary that showcases men and women living with and fighting HIV in the rural south; the film addresses some of the broader social and political issues that plague this region in crisis. In conjunction with the screening, SAC will release a new report, *The Southern States Manifesto: Update 2012*, which provides an analysis of the current and complex issues associated with HIV in the South. With the *Manifesto*, SAC hopes to bring light and understanding to these issues and further encourage all individuals to use the *Southern States Manifesto: Update 2012* as a tool and a resource to participate in HIV advocacy efforts at the local, state, and national level.

"We are excited about releasing the *Manifesto* in tandem with the premiere of *deepsouth*," said Michael Murphree, SAC's Executive Director. "We feel *deepsouth* provides real-life profiles for what the *Manifesto* conveys." SAC's Policy Chair, Skip Rosenthal, agrees, saying, "The movie gives the *Manifesto* heart, and the *Manifesto* punctuates the movie with demographic facts." He continues, "I think they are natural together."

Following the film and release of the *Manifesto*, guests will contribute to a candid conversation about the issues raised and asked to identify opportunities to effect lasting change. The post-film discussion will be led by Dr. David Holtgrave, Chair of John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, with *deepsouth* director Lisa Biagiotti. They will be joined by a panel of experts: Thomas Dobbs, MD (infectious disease doctor in Mississippi), Wayne Duffus, MD (Medical Director, HIV/STD Division of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control), Julia Galdo (Managing Director, Health Communication and Social Marketing, American Institutes for Research), Kathie Hiers (CEO, AIDS Alabama), Monica Johnson (Founder and Executive Director, HEROES in Louisiana), Peter Leone, MD (Medical Director, HIV/STD Division of the North Carolina Department of Health), Carolyn McAllaster (Project Director, Southern HIV/AIDS Strategy

Initiative “SASI”/Duke Law AIDS and Policy Project), Michael Murphree (Executive Director, Southern AIDS Coalition), Perness C. Seele (Founder and CEO, The Balm in Gilead), Miriam Vega (Vice President, Latino Commission on AIDS Deep South Project), and others.

The Southern AIDS Coalition is planning a continued partnership with the director of *deepsouth*. SAC is working to link her with our member organizations throughout the South for local showings of this powerful documentary. For further information about the Southern AIDS Coalition and the *deepsouth* documentary visit www.SouthernAIDSCoalition.org and deepsouthfilm.com.

About Southern AIDS Coalition

The Southern AIDS Coalition (SAC) is a membership organization comprised of government representatives, community organizations, advocates, people living with HIV disease, and business entities. This unique partnership is a result of the burgeoning numbers of people in the South with infection rates much higher than the rest of the U.S. population, particularly for newly diagnosed cases. SAC promotes and supports highly effective advocacy coalitions and activities at the state and federal levels in sixteen states and the District of Columbia. We are committed to the development of accessible and high quality systems of HIV and sexually-transmitted infection (STI) prevention, care, treatment, support services, and housing throughout the South. SAC’s direct actions to promote accessible and high quality systems related to HIV disease are achieved through targeted and broad-based, community-driven, effective advocacy efforts with state and local policy makers, federal policy decision makers, and national HIV/AIDS advocacy groups. SAC provides advocacy coaching for southern state advocacy leaders and meeting facilitation for growing advocacy coalitions in these states. The coalition framework of SAC enhances the utilization of our policy position statements used by federal and state policy decision makers.

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If you’d like more information on this topic, or to schedule an interview with Michael Murphree, call Rainey Campbell at (205) 977-5910 or email RCopps@SouthernAIDSCoalition.org.