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## **NASTAD Executive Director Julie Scofield Announces Plans to Step Down and Pass the Leadership Baton**

*Leading HIV and Hepatitis C Treatment Expert Murray Penner Named New Executive Director*

**February 19, 2015, Washington, DC** – After a remarkable 22 years leading the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD), Julie Scofield will step down as executive director in March. Murray Penner, currently deputy executive director, will succeed her starting April 1, 2015. In planning her eventual departure, Ms. Scofield proposed to NASTAD's Executive Committee in October 2013 that Mr. Penner succeed her as NASTAD's Executive Director when she stepped down. Following the approval of that succession plan, Ms. Scofield and Mr. Penner have been leading NASTAD collaboratively to ensure his readiness to assume the leadership role. Mr. Penner was the unanimous choice to lead the organization and will become only the second executive director in NASTAD's 23-year history.

"The decision to step down feels right for the organization at this time and for me. There is no one reason why but a convergence of personal, professional, political and organizational reasons that led me to a heartfelt knowing that I needed a change as did NASTAD. The good news is that I am passing the baton to an extraordinary leader who is eager to lead the organization into the future and the challenges we all know are ahead," commented Ms. Scofield.

Ms. Scofield opened NASTAD's doors in 1993, determined to help a dedicated group of state AIDS directors forge a common voice to advocate for an urgent response to the AIDS epidemic across the U.S. At that time, Ryan White programs were in their infancy, effective prevention interventions were lacking or being blocked by political forces, and the numbers of deaths from AIDS were still on the rise with little treatment to offer. Since that time, NASTAD has evolved many times over and is now incredibly robust and rigorously attending to the needs of state health department HIV/AIDS and hepatitis programs and its international governmental partners for capacity building assistance, technical assistance, and strong advocacy for sound public health policy based on science. NASTAD now supports HIV and hepatitis programs in 59 U.S. states and territories and 14 countries and has an annual budget of more than \$12 million.

Today, the HIV community is encountering a confluence of remarkable opportunities and unprecedented pressures—to advance prevention, care, and treatment approaches that can begin to end the HIV and hepatitis epidemics, in the context of the most far-reaching transformation in our nation's health care system in the last 50 years, and during an uncertain funding environment. This is no small task, and it demands steady and experienced leadership.

"As an openly gay man living with HIV for nearly 30 years and one of the nation's leading HIV and hepatitis C treatment experts, Murray knows all too well the challenges we face in bringing these epidemics to an end," noted NASTAD Chair and Washington State AIDS Director Maria Courogen. "He is uniquely qualified to lead NASTAD in supporting health departments through the challenges that lie ahead."

Mr. Penner joined NASTAD in 2001 and became Deputy in 2005. Since that time he has established himself as an expert on HIV treatment and access to care and has worked alongside Ms. Scofield to build a strong organization that is uniquely situated to support health department leaders in the U.S. and ministry of health staff around the globe in realizing NASTAD's vision of a world free of HIV and

hepatitis.

"Despite the challenges in front of us, I couldn't be more thrilled to lead an organization like NASTAD at this moment in time," says Mr. Penner. "Right here, right now, we have the tools to end the HIV epidemic and I look forward to continuing the fight alongside health department leaders and our partners for the political will and resources we need to end HIV once and for all."

"It's been 22 years since I first opened the doors at NASTAD. Now feels like the right time to step aside and make room for new passion, new energy, and new ideas," says Ms. Scofield. "Murray is the right person for the job at exactly the right time. I've known and worked with him for 14 years and can personally attest to his deep commitment to NASTAD's mission. I'm confident NASTAD won't skip a beat with Murray as its new leader and I'm ever more optimistic that the end of HIV is within our reach."

### **About NASTAD**

Founded in 1992, NASTAD is a nonprofit national association of state and territorial health department directors who have programmatic responsibility for administering HIV/AIDS and hepatitis health care, prevention, education, and supportive services programs funded by state and federal governments. For more information, visit [www.NASTAD.org](http://www.NASTAD.org).

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