Dear XX:

*Far too often, women living with HIV are talked* ***about****, instead of talked* ***to****, at the tables where decisions are made about our lives.*

**That’s why I am a member of Positive Women’s Network-USA (PWN-USA). Our mission is to shift that balance**: to prepare and involve women living with HIV, in all our diversity, including gender identity and sexual expression, to be at those decision-making tables.

In September 2014, PWN-USA held its first-ever National Leadership Summit for Women Living with HIV to build advocacy skills and leadership capacity among over 200 women living with HIV from 26 states, the US Virgin Islands, Canada and Mexico.

Many women nationwide have cited the summit as a turning point in their HIV story, where they moved from isolation to advocacy and found the support and courage to share their stories to fight stigma. In addition, following the 2014 Summit, participants reported increased involvement in advocacy work, and that they were better prepared to engage in policy discussions about topics ranging from HIV criminalization to Affordable Care Act implementation. Since the Summit:

* 5 new regional PWN-USA chapters have formally affiliated (Bay Area, Georgia, Louisiana, New York and Houston).
* All twelve of our chapters have reported an increase in membership and activity level.
* As a result of mobilization by our constituents, several recommendations addressing the intersections between trauma, violence and health outcomes for women with HIV were incorporated into the 2015 National HIV/AIDS Strategy.
* In at least four states, PWN-USA members are leading campaigns to decriminalize HIV.

In 2016, PWN-USA is building on that success with its second national summit: ***SPEAK UP! A National Summit for Women Living with HIV,*** to take place September 27-30 in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. During the Summit, women living with HIV will build leadership skills, discuss timely policy, legal and research trends relevant to women’s lives, and strategize to support organizing and advocacy at a federal and state level. This Summit, led by and for women living with HIV, is designed to give us the skills, tools and connections we need to be effective advocates for the issues that directly impact us and our communities. You can learn more about the Summit here: www.pwn-usa.org/2016-summit.

***As an advocate and a member of PWN-USA, attending this Summit is crucially important to me—but I may not be able to attend without your financial support.*** While PWN-USA is committed to keeping the cost to attendees low to ensure maximum participation from the most impacted communities, this small nonprofit organization is not able to pay for our travel to and from Fort Walton Beach. There is also a $125 registration fee, which includes our accommodations and meals throughout the Summit.

***I hope I can count on your support to get me to the Summit!*** If you think this is as great an opportunity as I do, and would like to support other women in getting to the Summit as well, you may be interested in being a supporting individual or organization. Supporting individuals, organizations and sponsors will be recognized and thanked during the Summit as well as in the Summit printed program and final report. PWN-USA also encourages supporting organizations to share materials at our Summit resource table, and will provide details on shipping materials at a later time. Learn more about being a supporter or sponsor of the Summit here: www.pwn-usa.org/sponsor.

Please let me know at your earliest convenience if you are able to support my participation in the Summit!

If you have further questions, please e-mail pwnsummit@gmail.com or call PWN-USA at 510-698-3811. **Thank you** for your support and sisterhood.

In Sisterhood and Solidarity,

***Benefits and Considerations for Summit Participants:***

PWN-USA’s National Summit is an opportunity for women living with HIV to create a network of support and community, and to strengthen advocacy skills. All women living with HIV ages 18 and older, including transgender women, are welcome to attend!

Consider supporting participants who:

* Have expressed an interest in increasing their involvement in advocacy
* Represent heavily impacted and/or marginalized communities including women of color, women with low incomes, young women, transgender women, queer women, women with disabilities, women with immigrant or refugee experiences, and women who have experienced incarceration and/or criminalization.
* Have opportunities and support to apply their knowledge and skills in their communities upon return from the Summit.
* Your organization seeks to support and develop as leaders.

Each participant will share a hotel room with one other conference participant. PWN-USA will provide three nights of lodging (nights of Sept. 27, 28, and 29) and all meals and snacks during the Summit.

 Services and amenities available at the Summit will include:

* Refrigerator in room
* Spanish language interpretation
* Accessible rooms and facilities

Participants will be responsible for any incidental costs including food and drinks purchased outside of meals and snacks provided, and any damage to rooms.

For up-to-date information about PWN-USA’s Summit, please visit: [www.pwn-usa.org/2016-summit](http://www.pwn-usa.org/2016-summit).