

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

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**John Cameron Mitchell
To Host Public Forum on
Barebacking, Drugs, and Internet Sex**

Forum to Ignite Public Discourse about Factors Linked to Spread of HIV among Gay Men

New York (N.Y.) (June 29, 2004) Actor **John Cameron Mitchell** (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*) will headline a public forum targeting the rise of new HIV infections among gay men. Intended to uncover and openly discuss the roles barebacking, drug use, and Internet hook-ups play in HIV transmission, the event will be the fourth public meeting in the Community Forum Series organized by **Daniel Carlson** and **Bruce Kellerhouse**, Ph.D. of HIV Forum.

Organizers Carlson and Kellerhouse believe the timing for this forum is crucial. "It's time for all of us in the gay community to stand up and take action against rising infection rates. We know from our previous forums that the gay community is hungry for a public dialogue about the secretive and sometimes dangerous behaviors that are driving new HIV infections," said Carlson. He added, "The grassroots prevention campaign that we hoped to create by holding these forums is opening up and evolving. But the only way to change people's thinking about their behavior and to ensure a lasting impact is to keep people talking."

"Our public forums have created an enormous response from the community, including funding from the City's Health Department for crystal meth prevention ads," said Dr. Kellerhouse. "Public awareness of crystal meth has skyrocketed since our February 8 Forum ("The Crystal-Meth HIV Connection") now its time to turn the community's attention toward other factors that are contributing to new HIV and STD infections." He went on to say, "The synergy created by multiple crystal meth awareness campaigns opens the door to talking about wider issues affecting gay men's health and creates the possibility of making a big difference in our community's well-being."

John Cameron Mitchell, host for the event, will moderate a panel discussion comprised of expert commentary and personal stories from community members. Panelists include

Jonathan Perry, a 27- year old HIV positive gay Black man most recently seen on *BET* and the *Oprah Winfrey Show*. Perry has become a national figure in the effort to raise awareness about HIV prevention in the Black community.

The two-hour event will include one hour for a panel discussion and 1 hour for comments from the audience in a town-hall style format.

Sponsors for the event include H. van Ameringen Foundation, Broadway Cares/Equity Fight AIDS, the New York City AIDS Fund of the New York Community Trust, Gay.com/Planetout Partners, Astor Medical Group, *Next Magazine*, *Gay City News*, *POZ*, and Callen-Lorde Community Health Center

Event Details:

Title: “Barebacking, Drugs, and Internet Hook-ups: Is HIV Unstoppable?”

Date: Tuesday, July 13, 2004

Location: FIT Amphitheater 27th Street, between 7th and 8th Avenues

Time: 7-9 PM

Format: 1 hour panel discussion, 1 hour audience comment