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New Initiative ‘Beyond the Sheets’ Supports HBCU Student Success By Advancing Reproductive Well-Being

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Dec. 1, 2023) — Today, [Power to Decide](#) is proud to announce the launch of ‘[Beyond the Sheets](#)’, our national student-led initiative aimed to address the sexual and reproductive health needs of students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

The launch date of December 1 coincides with World AIDS Day, an international day dedicated to raising awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and honoring those who have passed from the disease. “The vast majority of HBCUs are located in southern states, which accounts for [more than half of all new HIV diagnoses](#) in the United States,” said Power to Decide Senior Director of Health Equity, [JeNeen Anderson](#). “These states often have stringent laws that limit access to sex education, contraception and abortion and will greatly impact HBCU students’ reproductive well-being and sexual health. This highlights the importance of Power to Decide HBCU Student Ambassadors, as they will share valuable information and resources on campuses and on social media to advance the reproductive well-being of their communities.”

Students from across five HBCUs were chosen to lead this initiative based on their demonstrated ability to inspire and shape the culture of how their peers receive, digest and engage in sexual and reproductive health conversations. The ambassadors will focus on several key activities, including boosting social media engagement related to sexual health and reproductive well-being and implementing on-the-ground activation efforts.

Power to Decide is excited to welcome the following students and reproductive well-being champions that will lead this movement:

- Andre Poyser and Kaila Coleman of Fayetteville State University
- Nayla McClure and Rokiyah Hobbs of Tougaloo College
- Haileigh Trainer and Wischell Joseph of Tuskegee University
- Jackeima Flemming and Kurvonte Richards-Willett of the University of the Virgin Islands
- Jalah Bates and Mya Bledsoe of Xavier University of Louisiana

“As public health majors, we feel compelled to educate our peers on how to make great sexual health decisions. Sexual health is a sensitive subject for many people in this era. We are inspired to participate in this ambassadorship to help students break down negative stigmas. College is a journey that encourages students to be curious about many facets of life. The repercussions of our judgments are frequently the result of a lack of knowledge. We want to start a movement of freedom for our peers to ask questions, learn about contraception and get the help they need to be their healthiest selves,” said Jalah and Mya, Power to Decide HBCU Student Ambassadors at Xavier University of Louisiana.

“We are extremely excited to have students from five HBCU campuses using the power of their voice and the power of social media to give other students access to the information and resources they need to make informed sexual and reproductive health decisions,” stated Power to Decide [CEO Raegan McDonald-Mosley](#), MD, MPH.

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[Power to Decide](#) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to advance sexual and reproductive well-being for all by providing trusted information, expanding access to quality services, and catalyzing culture change.