



**Contacts:** For the Tavis Smiley Presents: In New Orleans: For UnitedHealthcare's  
Vanesse Lloyd Sgambati Leslie Doles Generations of Wellness:  
(215) 877-2012 keating magee Dan Miller  
[Vlloydsgam@aol.com](mailto:Vlloydsgam@aol.com) (504) 442-8983 (714) 226-3726  
[ldoles@keatingmagee.com](mailto:ldoles@keatingmagee.com) [dan.miller@phs.com](mailto:dan.miller@phs.com)

*(For Immediate Release)*

## **MEDIA ADVISORY (for Feb. 22-23)**

### **STATE OF THE BLACK UNION BRINGS INFLUENTIAL THINKERS, ENTERTAINERS AND POLITICAL LEADERS TO EDUCATE, ENLIGHTEN AND EMPOWER THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY**

- *UnitedHealthcare supports this two-day event and SOBU Builds Day of Service to help rebuild parts of New Orleans devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita*

**WHAT:** Some of the most influential thinkers, entertainers and political leaders gather each year to discuss the State of the Black Union during Black History Month. Presented annually in February – Black History Month – by Tavis Smiley Presents, the symposium was created to educate, enlighten and empower America by bringing people together and engaging them in thoughtful dialogue, leading the way to constructive action. Smiley will host a panel discussion with noted politicians, social scientists, business leaders and clergy on “Reclaiming our Democracy, Deciding our Future” on Saturday, Feb. 23 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

This year’s event also includes **SOBU Builds**, an all-day event with volunteers working at six community-service projects simultaneously on Friday, Feb. 22, in the Upper Ninth Ward, the Lower Ninth Ward, Central City, Hollygrove, New Orleans East and Broadmoor. SOBU Builds lead partners include Habitat for Humanity; Trinity Christian Community, Xavier University and others. To date, nearly 2,000 volunteers have signed up to participate!

**UnitedHealthcare’s Generations of Wellness**, which serves the health needs of African Americans, is one of the sponsors of SOBU Builds, and will help to clean up the surrounding residential community of Xavier University. In addition, UnitedHealthcare will provide free health screenings during the symposium’s intermission for those in attendance.

*-- Participation in the service project and attendance at the panel discussion is free and open to the public. Advanced free registration is required at <http://tavistalks.erban.com/sobu2008/>*

*Advisory/State of the Black Union*  
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**WHO:** A partial list of symposium panelists include:

- Rev. Al Sharpton
- Rev. Jesse Jackson
- New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin
- Donna Brazile
- Sr. Lt. Gov. Mitch Landrieu
- Newark, N.J., Mayor Cory Booker
- Norman Francis, president of Xavier University, **AND MORE**

**WHEN/**

**WHERE:** Friday, Feb. 22: SOBU Builds 7 a.m.-3 p.m.  
• Busing to the SOBU Builds sites to depart from Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

Saturday, Feb. 23: Symposium 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

• Health screenings by UnitedHealthcare 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center

900 Convention Center Blvd.,

New Orleans, La., 70130

(504) 582-3023

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** To obtain media credentials and for more information about the SOBU Builds sites, all personnel must register in advance with identification certifying that you are a working member of the news media on assignment. Business cards, press badges, or letters from editors from established news organizations are sufficient to establish eligibility.

To register, contact Vanesse Lloyd-Sgambati at 215-877-2012 or (fax) 215-877-4846, or log on to <http://www.tavistalks.com/events/signatureevents/press/>.

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