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# Aurora native on Obama HIV council

**By Paul Dailing**

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When the new Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS has its first meeting, a native Auran will be part of the team.

Doug Michels, the CEO of a company that designs oral HIV tests, was one of 24 recent appointees to a council, designed to advise the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in developing a nationwide strategy to combat HIV and AIDS.



**Doug Michels**

One of seven children, Michels grew up on Lehnertz Avenue in Aurora. He graduated from Aurora Central Catholic High School in 1974 before attending the University of Illinois.

“My father, my grandparents all grew up in Aurora. My mother still lives there,” said Michels, who now lives in New Jersey.

One of his goals on the council, which includes health-care experts, community advocates like actress Rosie Perez and people infected with HIV, will be to examine why HIV/AIDS hits some communities so hard. For example, about 10 percent of the population is black, but about half the HIV/AIDS cases spring from that community.

“Unfortunately, HIV/AIDS disproportionately impacts certain groups of individuals — for example African-Americans,” Michels said. “Similarly, what’s described as MSM, men who have sex with men, are disproportionately impacted. Latinos are disproportionately impacted.”

Part of the council's focus is to increase access to health care, a focus that dovetails with President Obama's push for national health-care reform.

"I think it certainly is part of that (initiative)," Michels said. "This is about increasing access to care, a specific goal the president stated."

The council will meet at least three to four times a year, more if needed. Michels was appointed to a two-year term. The council was first formed under President Bill Clinton in 1995.