



**National Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2011:
Aboriginal Youth From Across Canada Will Meet for Launch
Events & to Discuss Implementing the National Aboriginal
Youth Strategy on HIV and AIDS in Canada (NAYSHAC)**

The National Aboriginal Youth Council on HIV and AIDS (NAYCHA) will be travelling to Ottawa, ON for Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week December 1-5, 2011. In addition to team and skills building as a Council on November 30th, these youth will travel from different provinces and territories to make their voices heard together as more than 50% of the overall Aboriginal population in Canada is under the age of 25. On December 1, which is also World AIDS Day, NAYCHA members will attend Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week launch events and speak to the importance of youth leadership in addressing the realities facing Aboriginal youth.

The over-representation of Aboriginal youth in HIV test reports and AIDS diagnoses strongly suggest a need to lower HIV and AIDS levels among Aboriginal youth in Canada. Between 1979 and 2008, **19.3% of reported AIDS cases among Aboriginal people were between 15 and 29 years old**, compared with 14.8% of reported AIDS cases among non-Aboriginal people in the same group according to the Public Health Agency of Canada in their *HIV/AIDS Epi Update*, July 2010.

To address the realities behind these numbers, a **National Aboriginal Youth Strategy on HIV and AIDS in Canada** was created by NAYCHA with a vision that all Aboriginal youth in Canada need to receive empowerment, support, hope and courage to become Aboriginal youth leaders in lowering HIV infection; promoting human rights to be educated and talk about HIV and AIDS; eliminating stigma and discrimination about HIV and AIDS; and, to support Aboriginal People Living with HIV and AIDS.

Jessica Yee, Chair of NAYCHA and the Executive Director of the National Youth Sexual Health Network referenced the importance of involving Aboriginal youth in planning around HIV and AIDS:

“The time has come for young people to be heard, and we look forward to involving our National Aboriginal Youth Council in every way possible as representative members for their respective communities, provinces, and territories. I am reminded of a teaching of the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace, which says ‘In every deliberation, you must consider the impact on the seventh generation,’” NAYSHAC.

MEDIA INFO – ABORIGINAL YOUTH



AAAW is a time for connecting national Aboriginal organizations, government partners, health care providers, and community leaders to support change through their own action and by supporting the action of others. NAYCHA is part of our Aboriginal response to HIV and AIDS: It takes a whole community to support change!

Krista Shore, CAAN Board member and Honourary member of NAYCHA states, “Aboriginal leaders, chiefs and council can take acknowledgement of this epidemic. No more talking about it...let’s take action!”

Where: Residence Inn by Marriott Ottawa, 161 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, ON
When: December 1, 2011 10:00 am EST
RSVP: By November 28, 2011 to Tara Felix taraf@caan.ca or call (613) 238-1122 (Toll free 1-800-853-8468)

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