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National Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2012: Getting to Zero Brings Leaders Together in Winnipeg

Winnipeg, MB (November 5, 2012) – The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) will be hosting the Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week Launch Event on December 1, 2012 in Winnipeg, MB where the Manitoba Minister of Healthy Living, Honourable Jim Rondeau will be in attendance. National Aboriginal leadership will be present to support the launch of Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week will be followed by workshops across the country (Halifax, Regina, Toronto, Iqaluit, and Victoria) to continue discussions on Aboriginal HIV and AIDS issues in Canada Dec 2-6, 2012.

Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2012 will connect national Aboriginal organizations, government partners, health care providers, and community leaders to focus on how Aboriginal people can work together to reach the goal of: **Getting to Zero. Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS related deaths.**

“We must all work together to reduce the number of new HIV infections by promoting prevention, education, and testing. Aboriginal communities developing strategies and actions to combat HIV and AIDS will foster our journey to zero,” stated Ken Clement, CEO of CAAN.

Aboriginal people (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) continue to respond to HIV and AIDS with community-based initiatives, but are still experiencing epidemic proportions **3.6 times higher** than other Canadians. An estimated 4,300 to 6,100 Aboriginal persons were living with HIV including AIDS; 8.0% of all prevalent HIV infections and comprised about 12.5% of all new HIV infections in Canada in 2008. This year AAW will focus on how to reduce these numbers to zero:

- The 2012 theme represents goals to eliminate transmissions from mother to child, which means zero babies are born HIV positive in Canada; zero tolerance of discrimination towards those living with HIV and AIDS, and zero barriers to treatment for all.

A convergence of culture, social, health, and political events during Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week is creating a climate for important developments on the Aboriginal HIV and AIDS agenda in Canada. CAAN invites you to join us on our journey to zero:

Where: Delta Winnipeg, 350 St. Mary Avenue, Winnipeg, MB

When: December 1, 2012, 10:00 am CST

RSVP: By November 20, 2012 <http://bit.ly/aaaw2012winnipeg>

About CAAN. www.caan.ca

The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) is a not-for-profit coalition of individuals and organizations which provides leadership, support and advocacy for Aboriginal individuals living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, regardless of where they reside. Their philosophy is that all Aboriginal Peoples deserve the right to protect themselves against infectious disease and thrives on providing the Aboriginal community with accurate and current information about HIV including risks of contracting the virus, issues of care and treatment, and support for families and those living with the disease.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

Dec 1 – Winnipeg, MB Delta Winnipeg
Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2012 Launch Event

Dec 2 – Halifax, NS Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre
Getting to ZERO in the Maritimes: Luncheon and Merchandise Bingo Fundraiser

Dec 3 – Iqaluit, NU Various Iqaluit locations (request details)
Inuit Youth Rock! Protect Your Body, Strengthen Your Community

Dec 4 – Regina, SK All Nations Hope AIDS Network
Aboriginal Brothers and Sisters in the Justice System

Dec 5 – Toronto, ON Ramada Plaza Downtown Toronto
Think Global – Act Local: Indigenous people and HIV and AIDS

Dec 5/6 – Victoria, BC Hotel Grand Pacific Victoria
Celebrating Aboriginal Women

For more information on these events visit: www.aboriginalaidsawareness.com