



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saskatchewan Indigenous Council on HIV and AIDS
International Indigenous Working Group on HIV and AIDS
Saskatchewan Indigenous Youth Advisory Council
All Nations Hope Network
Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network

Think Globally – Act Locally: Coordinating a Response to HIV in Saskatchewan’s Indigenous Communities

Regina, SK (November 19, 2015) – The Saskatchewan Indigenous Council on HIV and AIDS (SICHA) and partners are gathering Indigenous HIV and AIDS leaders to continue discussion on a made-in-Saskatchewan HIV response. The leadership forum, *Think Globally – Act Locally: Coordinating a Response to HIV in Saskatchewan’s Indigenous Communities*, will be hosted in Saskatchewan on November 30th and is a precursory to December 1st World AIDS Day when people worldwide unite in addressing the HIV epidemic.

HIV and AIDS rates among Saskatchewan’s Indigenous people are among the highest in the world. New HIV infections in some **Saskatchewan reserve communities are 11 times higher than the Canadian national rate, and, provincially, the average rate is 3 times that of the national rates.** To help galvanize a collaborative, coordinated way forward, *Think Globally – Act Locally: Coordinating a Response to HIV in Saskatchewan’s Indigenous Communities*, is a forum for all leaders – formal, informal, elected, selected, and self-directed – to join in collaboratively discussing solution-focused responses related to HIV in Indigenous communities grounded in Saskatchewan’s reality.

At this time last year, All Nations Hope Network (ANHN) launched the *Saskatchewan Indigenous Strategy on HIV and AIDS* (SISHA). This strategy outlined the need for agencies to coordinate their work with Indigenous people living with HIV and to work across sectors to address the social realities contributing to HIV in Saskatchewan communities. SISHA outlines and advocates for the needs of urban, rural, reserve, and remote communities, and provides strategic areas, key objectives and examples of activities to be undertaken as part of the response to provide guidance to all leaders and concerned community members.

"It is time to coordinate a way forward that includes Indigenous ways as part of addressing root causes of HIV in Saskatchewan. This includes Indigenous ways, teachings, ceremonies and languages, which are important in creating solution-based programs and policies," asserts ANHN, CEO and SICHA, Chair, Margaret Poitras. "We are confident that in partnering with other leading Indigenous organizations to host a forum where we engage all leaders in a constructive, collaborative way, we are laying a foundation – a tone of reconciliation – from which we can contribute to collectively doing better."

International HIV-response frameworks and human rights mechanisms can be used locally to provide guidance and leverage action in building a more robust response. Providing insight into these frameworks, Trevor Stratton, North American Delegate of the NGO Delegation to the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board and Coordinator of the International Indigenous Working Group on HIV and AIDS, will deliver a keynote address at the forum. In addition, forum participants will be lead by the Saskatchewan Indigenous Youth Advisory Council through an interactive group consultation process to collaboratively brainstorm solutions to current challenges.

For more information visit allnationshope.ca ~ iivgha.org ~ or aboriginalaidsawareness.com

- What:** Think Globally – Act Locally: Coordinating a Response to HIV in Saskatchewan’s Indigenous Communities
- Where:** Ramada Plaza Regina Downtown, 1818 Victoria Avenue, Regina, SK
- When:** Monday, November 30, 2015 at 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm CST
- Register:** <http://allnationshope.ca/calendar/post/leadership-forum> (Space is Limited)

About ANHN

Since 1995, ANHN is a network of Indigenous people, organizations and agencies who respectfully strive to provide support and services to First Nations, Métis and Inuit families and communities who are experiencing HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C in Saskatchewan.

About IIWGHA

The International Indigenous Working Group on HIV & AIDS is comprised of leaders throughout the Americas and Oceania who build a unified voice for Indigenous peoples in collective action against HIV and AIDS. The IIWGHA envisions a world where Indigenous communities are empowered to direct the course of their own HIV prevention, care, treatment, and support.

About SIYAC

The Saskatchewan Indigenous Youth Advisory Council is to provide culturally relevant, evidence based prevention programs to prevent HIV/AIDS, and Hepatitis C infection among Indigenous Youth in Saskatchewan. SIYAC is committed to striving to be balanced role models to keeping the Indigenous Youth inspired by strategies to live healthy lifestyles through culturally relevant healing and to promote spiritual, mental, physical, emotional, and social well-being of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C (HCV).

About SICHA

SICHA’s mission is to create an Indigenous provincial voice and structure that links Indigenous people with their leaders, varying levels of government, AIDS service organizations, and other allies in the province in a collective action to lower the disproportionate impact of HIV and AIDS experienced by Indigenous people.

About CAAN

The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) is a not-for-profit coalition of individuals and organizations which provides leadership, support and advocacy for Aboriginal people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, regardless of where they reside.

Media inquiries

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