

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



National Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2016:

Aboriginal communities across Canada to assess funding cuts' devastating consequences to Canada's fight against HIV and AIDS

Ottawa, ON (November 2, 2016) – The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) announces Aboriginal leadership and their supporters, including the Canadian Global Health All-Parliamentary Caucus on HIV TB & Malaria, will gather on December 1, 2016 in Ottawa, ON to launch Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2016. It will be followed by December 2 – 6, 2016 workshops across the country (Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Haines Junction, Toronto, and more) to continue discussions on Aboriginal HIV and AIDS issues in Canada.

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis organizations continue to respond to HIV and AIDS with community-based initiatives, but they are still over-represented and experiencing epidemic proportions **2.7 times higher** than other Canadians. In a parallel theme to international World AIDS Day: **Hands Up for #HIV Prevention**, Aboriginal Peoples across Canada are putting up their hands to create community readiness and culturally safe approaches in order to stop this epidemic. Hands up by leading an Indigenous response, testing to “know your status”, eliminating stigma and discrimination, ensuring equitable access, and protecting our whole community.

This series of events across Canada will connect national Aboriginal organizations, government partners, health care providers, and community leaders as they reflect on what has been achieved with regard to an Indigenous response to HIV, what must still be achieved, and how recent Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) funding cuts will affect their role with the UNAIDS 90-90-90 Fast Track Strategy for HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention.

UNAIDS has put out an urgent call for front-load funding so that by 2020, **90%** of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status, **90%** of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy, and **90%** of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression in order to end the epidemic by 2030. This is why the federal government has pledged \$804 million to international efforts on AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis; yet within Canada, CAAN and other HIV service organizations have had their federal funding drastically cut or completely discontinued all across the country.

"The impact of PHAC's decision to severely reduce funding for CAAN decimates the leading voice of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples living with HIV or AIDS and will have far-reaching consequences on both Indigenous health and reconciliation," stated Ken Clement, CEO of Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network. "It is our hope that over Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week we will find ways to hold the process accountable in order to restore and create wellness opportunities for Indigenous Peoples."



The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network and its co-hosts, Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association of Canada, Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development (ICAD) and invite you to participate in Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week as it brings awareness to the different aspects of HIV prevention and key populations such as Aboriginal women and youth living with HIV and AIDS.

Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network could lose up to 70% of its funding and calls for supporters to sign this PETITION: www.change.org/CAAN

Where: Sheraton Hotel, 150 Albert St. Ottawa, ON
When: December 1, 2016, 11:00 am – 3:00 pm EST
RSVP: By November 25, 2016 <http://bit.ly/aaaw2016rsvp>

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About CAAN www.caan.ca

The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) is a non-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 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 – Ottawa, ON Sheraton Hotel, 150 Albert St.
Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2016 Launch Luncheon

Dec 2 Two-Spirits & Transgender Day
Toronto, ON The 519 Community Centre
Sharing Our Wisdom Transgender Event

Winnipeg, MB Thunderbird House
Indigenous Gender-based Responses to HIV & Hep C

Saskatoon, SK Saskatoon Indian & Metis Friendship Centre
No One Left Behind - LGBTQ Memorial Round Dance

Vancouver, BC Positive Woman's Network Society
Transgender Day Vancouver Luncheon

Dec 3 Youth & Metis Day

Haines Junction, YT Dáky Cultural Centre
Dän ts'än nännji (People Helping People)

Edmonton, AB Metis Nation of Alberta
Let's Start a Conversation

Dec 4 Women's Day

Prince Albert, SK TBC
Let's Start a Conversation with Indigenous Women

Dec 5 Inuit & Testing Day

Ottawa (Vanier), ON St. Margret's Church
Inuit HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

Montreal, QC Native Friendship Centre of Montreal
Aboriginal AIDS Awareness HIV Testing and Training Day

Dec 6 International Day

Vancouver, BC Vancouver Native Health Society

HIV and the Survival, Dignity and Well-being of Indigenous Peoples Globally

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

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