

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## **National Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2015: Leaders unite across Canada with community-based approaches to HIV and AIDS**

**Calgary, AB (November 3, 2015)** – The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) proudly announces national Aboriginal leadership and their supporters will gather in Calgary, AB on December 1, 2015 to launch Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2015. It will be accompanied by workshops across the country (Regina, Montreal, Winnipeg, Halifax, and Inuvik) to continue discussions on Aboriginal HIV and AIDS issues in Canada on November 30, December 2 – 5, 2015. Concluding with a Parliamentary Breakfast in Ottawa on December 10, 2015.

Every 3 hours a person is infected with HIV in Canada. 12% of those are Aboriginal people, even though they represent only 4% of the Canadian population. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit continue to respond to HIV and AIDS with community-based initiatives, but are still over-represented and experiencing epidemic proportions **3.6 times higher** than other Canadians.

Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2015 will connect national Aboriginal organizations, government partners, health care providers, and community leaders to focus on how they will work together to reach the goal of: **Getting to Zero. Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS related deaths.**

"Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week will be done a justice by closing the gap amongst Aboriginal people who live with HIV and AIDS, and by Aboriginal people getting tested so that they may know their status," stated CEO of CAAN, Ken Clement. "Creating community readiness and culturally safe approaches to testing, treatment, and support is the roadmap for the journey to zero."

This series of events across Canada will provide a forum for reflection: on what has been achieved with regard to the Aboriginal communities' response to HIV, what must still be achieved, and how to get to zero. The December 1 luncheon will include a special focus on Aboriginal People Living with HIV/AIDS and Métis, while the workshops will highlight women, youth, Inuit, and international HIV and AIDS developments.

CAAN and it's co-hosts, Shining Mountains, Kimamanow Atoskano Foundation, and HIV Network of Edmonton Society, invite you to participate in Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week as it reaches across all barriers to create a unified approach to combat Aboriginal HIV and AIDS in Canada:

Where: Calgary Festival Hall, 1215 – 10 Avenue SE, Calgary, AB  
When: December 1, 2015, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm MST  
RSVP: By November 26, 2015 at [www.bit.ly/aaaw2015launchsvp](http://www.bit.ly/aaaw2015launchsvp)

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**About CAAN [www.caan.ca](http://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:***

**Nov 30 – Regina, SK** Ramada Plaza Regina Downtown  
*Think Globally – Act Locally: What is Your Role?*

**Dec 1 – Calgary, AB** Calgary Festival Hall  
*Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2015 Launch Event*

**Dec 2**

**Montreal, QC** L'Auberge St. Gabriel  
*Aboriginal Women and Children: Protecting the Heart of Our Communities*

**Winnipeg, MB** WestEnd Commons Neighbourhood Resource Centre  
*Womens' Event #2: Testing is Sexy*

**Dec 4 – Halifax, NS** Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre  
*Two Spirit People and HIV and HCV*

**Dec 5 – Inuvik, NWT** Inuvialuit Community Corporations  
*Inuit Awareness Raising Event and HIV/AIDS Fair*

**Dec 10 – Ottawa, ON** Parliamentary Dining Room, Centre Block  
*Youth - Parliamentary Breakfast*

**For more information on these events visit: [www.aboriginalaidsawareness.com](http://www.aboriginalaidsawareness.com)**

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