



National Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2013: Leaders unite in Halifax to take "Getting to Zero" to the next level

Halifax, NS (November 5, 2013) – The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) and Healing Our Nations will be co-hosting the Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week Launch Event on December 1, 2013 in Halifax, NS. National Aboriginal leadership will be present to support the launch of Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week and will be followed by workshops across the country (Montreal, Ottawa, Prince Albert, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Vancouver) to continue discussions on Aboriginal HIV and AIDS issues in Canada Dec 1 – 6, 2013.

Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2013 will connect national Aboriginal organizations, government partners, health care providers, and community leaders to focus on how Aboriginal people can continue to work together to reach the goal of: **Getting to Zero. Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS related deaths.**

The significance of this year is that although World AIDS Day will celebrate progress made in fighting this deadly disease and moving towards zero, the improvements amongst Aboriginal communities are not significant enough. Aboriginal people (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) continue to respond to HIV and AIDS with community-based initiatives, but are still experiencing epidemic proportions **3.5 times higher** than other Canadians. An estimated 6,380 Aboriginal persons were living with HIV/AIDS; 8.9% of all prevalent HIV infections and comprised about 12.2% of all new HIV infections in Canada in 2011.

"Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week will focus on how to further reduce these numbers to zero by eliminating the stigma and discrimination that increase risk for Aboriginal communities," stated CEO of CAAN, Ken Clement. "Our 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 continued journey to zero:

Where: The Westin Nova Scotian, 1181 Hollis St, Halifax, NS
When: December 1, 2013, 10:00 am AST
RSVP: By November 21, 2013 at www.bit.ly/aaaw2013launchsvp



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 - Halifax, NS Westin Nova Scotian Hotel
Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2013 Launch Event

Dec 2 – Montreal, QC Kateri School, Kahnawake Mohawk Territory
A Rising Onkwehonwe Generation: No More Stigma, Shame and Discrimination!

Dec 3 – Ottawa, ON Parliamentary Hill
Parliamentary Breakfast

Dec 4 – Prince Albert, SK Prince Albert Métis Women's Association
Sharing Circle for Women: Beading Symbols of Hope for Our Community

Dec 4 – Winnipeg, MB Ka Ni Kanichihk
Women "Getting to Zero" Community Sharing Circle

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

Dec 6 – Vancouver, BC Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art
Human Rights, Global Lessons, Grass Roots Perspectives: Indigenous People and HIV/AIDS

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