

BUZZ ALERT

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National Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2011: Leaders Gather in Ottawa to Discuss Aboriginal Community

Vancouver, BC (November 8, 2011) – The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) will be hosting the Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week Launch Event on December 1, 2011 in Ottawa, ON where the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health will be in attendance. The official launch of Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week will be followed by workshops across the country to continue discussions on Aboriginal HIV and AIDS issues in Canada Dec 2-5, 2011.

The 2011 AAW will connect national Aboriginal organizations, government partners, health care providers, and community leaders to support change through their own action and by supporting the actions of others. The forum will focus on how community-based responses address the circumstances that underlie HIV infection rates: from creating inclusive rural, urban and, global communities to acknowledging constructive ways to respond to acts of intolerance and discrimination.

“We are sharing ways of working with and for Aboriginal people living with HIV and AIDS. Our communities show strength by protecting and supporting the most vulnerable. We are promoting health and wellbeing in our communities – we are fulfilling a sacred role in nurturing holistic healing, grounded in our cultural past and today’s reality,” stated Ken Clement, CEO of CAAN. “Practicing our Aboriginal values of respect, honour, and non-judgment toward others is key to our response – and this year we are asking all communities to become informed and lead the change.”

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. Overall, the HIV infection rate for Aboriginal people (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) was about 3.6 times higher than among other Canadians. Individuals living with HIV and AIDS may become isolated due to the stigma associated with the illness; social and community support plays an important role in helping individuals to accept their diagnosis and learn to live with HIV.

Our Aboriginal response to HIV and AIDS: It takes the whole community to support change! CAAN invites you to participate in the forum:

Where: Ottawa Marriott Hotel - 100 Kent Street, Ottawa, ON, Canada
When: December 1, 2011, 10:00 am EST
RSVP: By November 18, 2011 to Tara Felix taraf@caan.ca
or call (613) 238-1122 (Toll free: 1-800-853-8463)

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 - Ottawa, ON Residence Inn by Marriot
Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2011 Launch Event

Dec 2 – Montreal, QC TBC
Celebrating Aboriginal Women, Culture, and Community

Dec 3 – Online www.afn.ca
A Special Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week Webcast Event

Dec 4 – Winnipeg, MB Magnus Eliason Recreation Centre
Cultural Gathering and Awareness Sharing

Dec 5 – Edmonton, AB Edmonton Room, Edmonton Public Library, Downtown
Global Lessons ~ Local Practices: Indigenous and Aboriginal people and HIV and AIDS

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