

PRESS RELEASE

WORLD AIDS DAY

Canadian HIV/AIDS Advocates Urge Federal Government to Maintain Current levels of Health Funding

*56,000 Canadians living with HIV/AIDS: On the rise among women, Aboriginals
and young gay men*

December 1, 2008-Toronto: The Canadian Treatment Action Council (CTAC) is urging the federal government not to cut funding for health care - especially during this time of economic hardship.

Louise Binder, Chair of CTAC and an HIV-positive woman says, “Now more than ever we need to continue funding health care. We can only have a healthy economy if we keep our citizens healthy, including those with chronic diseases like HIV/AIDS. That’s why we need the federal government to take the lead in establishing a national Catastrophic Drug Program.

CTAC has long argued for a national Catastrophic Drug Plan that will assist working Canadians without private insurance to cover the high cost of drugs associated with HIV and other life threatening diseases.

Ron Rosenes, CTAC Vice chair adds, “Job security is on everyone’s mind. For people living with HIV/AIDS or other diseases that require access to high cost drug therapies, the prospect of maintaining your health and your job can be equally onerous.”

Patrick Cupido, CTAC Board member argues that, “There are about 56,000 Canadians living with HIV/AIDS. There are an additional 15,000 HIV-positive people who are still unaware of their HIV status. Especially during difficult economic times, Canada needs to continue to strengthen its efforts to curb the spread of HIV by doing more to provide access to testing, prevention, treatment and support needed for those living with HIV/AIDS and those who are co-infected with HCV/HBV”

HIV/AIDS increasingly affects and infects women—especially young women. HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects Canada’s Aboriginal peoples.

Canadian Treatment Action Council (CTAC)
Conseil canadien de surveillance et d'accès aux traitements (CCSAT)

CTAC urges greater investment into prevention efforts in Canada. “We know how this virus is spread, and we know how to prevent infections”. What is missing is a renewed government commitment to prevention messages that are targeted to the most vulnerable among us.

World AIDS Day is a time to remind the world about the HIV/AIDS epidemic is far from over. It is a day to remind Canadians that HIV/AIDS knows no borders or boundaries. Today, just as it was 25 years ago, the message remains the same: there is no cure, there is no vaccine, and anyone can become infected with HIV; prevention and timely treatment are the only tools we have to stop this disease.

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English Media Requests

Ruth Pritchard: 647 302 0912

French Media Request

Beatrice Cardin: 647 330 0114