



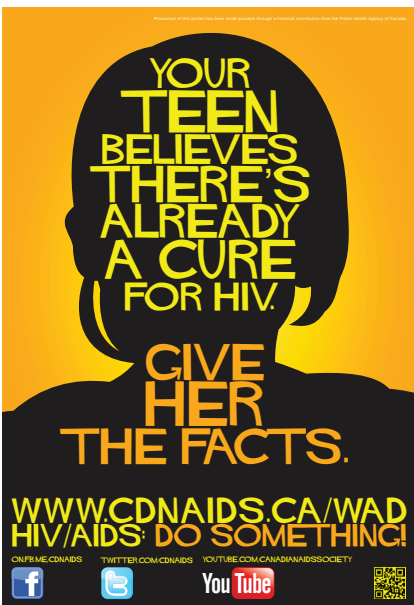
# HIV DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE. SO WHY DO WE?

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Writing a Letter to the Editor of your local or student newspaper is a great way to raise awareness about social issues like World AIDS Day. It's also a great way to start a public conversation about the impact of HIV/AIDS in Canada.

Letters to the Editor should be short, to the point and express why it's important to observe World AIDS Day 30 years after the first case of AIDS was identified in North America.

You can use or modify this template or write your own letter on World AIDS Day.



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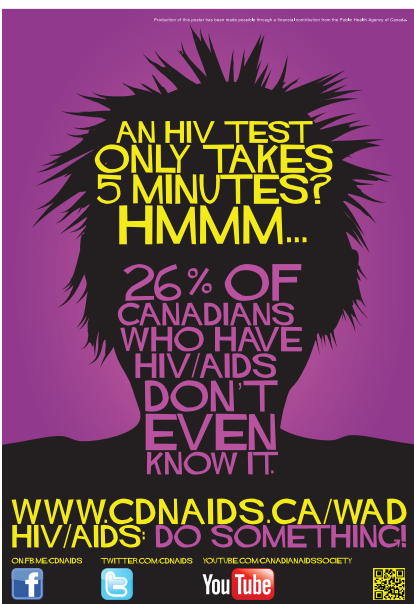
World AIDS Day is observed annually on December 1st and every year we talk about the sobering Canadian statistics. It is estimated that 68,000 Canadians wake up every day and continue to live with HIV. It is also estimated that 25 per cent of those living with HIV don't even know they have been infected. An estimated up to 12 people will wake up today who are not yet infected and will go to bed with a newly acquired HIV infection.

We may not think we can do anything to turn the tide, to reduce infections or to improve the lives of those already living with the virus but think of this: Stigma and discrimination contribute to HIV infections. It's a fact.

HIV-phobia, homophobia and transphobia, racism, classism and sexism all fuel the epidemic by eroding the self-esteem of those living with HIV, of queer people, of transpeople, of ethnic and cultural minorities and of women. This can drive people, especially youth, to take risks in their lives in search of love, of acceptance or for a release from the shame they may feel about who they are and the pressure of the implicit and explicit discrimination they face every day. By tolerating bullying and discrimination in our families, schools and communities, we are contributing to the spread of HIV in Canada. By reducing their effects, we help those who are most vulnerable.

HIV doesn't discriminate, so why do we? On December 1st, do your part and stand in solidarity rather than in judgment.

# DO SOMETHING!



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