



Annual Report Canadian AIDS Society



CANADIAN
AIDS
SOCIETY



SOCIÉTÉ
CANADIENNE
DU SIDA

ANNUAL REPORT 2014 - 2015

June, 2015

Dear Members,

It has been an exciting year for CAS. Between April 2014 and March 2015, we have worked to bring you a full year of useful resources, programs and activities. Each year we are excited to bring you our Annual Report, as it reflects our work on priority issues, brought forward by the members of the Canadian AIDS Society.

You will find enclosed in this document the successes that we have to celebrate together in responding to HIV and AIDS and the myriad of concerns that affect the lives of those living with, and at risk of contracting, HIV/AIDS. Throughout the year we have looked at rural and remote issues, faith-based communities, trans people, young gay men, people who are co-infected with hepatitis C and women's issues.

During our World AIDS Day Gala, we were honoured to host Canada's Minister of Health - The Honourable Rona Ambrose. During her remarks she reflected on the importance of the Canadian AIDS Society and its members in responding to the needs of individuals and communities in the response to HIV/AIDS in Canada. She spoke passionately about the need to address stigma and discrimination and to realize that together we are part of an essential response to meeting their needs.

We have represented CAS and the Canadian response to HIV/AIDS nationally and internationally and we are proud of the work that we have accomplished. This work depends greatly on partnerships and strategic engagement with stakeholders from within our membership and the larger AIDS movement in Canada.

It is important to remember that CAS is a coalition of community-based groups, and it is through this strength in numbers that we are able to represent our members at the national level.

The contents of this Annual Report are a celebration of the work accomplished and a recognition of the work left to be done. Sometimes our work can be quite difficult, and it is important to remember that together we can make a difference.

I am struck by the words of songwriter Cynthia Weil: *We have gone through some difficult times like everyone else and perhaps our working together and respecting each other's abilities, in addition to that little thing called love, helped us survive.*

Every day I am reminded of the love, respect, and compassion that all of you have for this work, and the people that we serve. I am honoured to be a part of this movement and look forward to 2015 and what the future holds for CAS and its members.

Sharing the passion,



Monique Doolittle-Romas,

CEO, Canadian AIDS Society.

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Governance

Strategic Planning

CAS was able to secure funding from Gilead to support the development of the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan. Starting in December of 2014, we worked with the Intersol Group to conduct a consultation with members, staff, funders, national partners, and board members (while we attempted to speak with previous members, there was no response to our offers.) 10 key informant interviews were conducted with members, 7 with Board members and 5 with national partners, and all members were invited to participate in an on-line consultation. The results of this consultation process were reviewed by the Board of Directors in March of 2015, and from that meeting 4 strategic directions were identified:

- Take a leadership role in determining the most effective way to support the HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C sector at the National level.
- Communicate With and Strengthen Value to Members
- Broaden CAS' Mandate to Include Hepatitis C
- Public Policy Engagement

The Draft Strategic Plan has been shared with our members and will be discussed at the upcoming Annual Meeting, held June 14-15, 2015, in Ottawa Ontario.

Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Forum and Annual Meeting

Every year the Canadian AIDS Society hosts a gathering of Persons Living with HIV/AIDS in conjunction with its Annual Meeting. The 2014 Forum was hosted at the Lord Elgin Hotel, in Ottawa Ontario from June 6-7, with the Annual Meeting following on June 8-9.

The Forum brings together persons living with HIV/AIDS from across Canada to share their experiences, build capacity and provide direction to the Canadian AIDS Society for the coming year. Priority issues emerging from the Forum include:

- HIV Disclosure and Criminalization as an issue for youth and adults
- HIV and Aging, Long term survivor and end of life supports
- PLWHIV/AIDS, GIPA, MIPA, Mentorship
- Increased cooperation of ACB, Aboriginal and Trans Organizations

Strategic Partnerships

The work taken on by the Canadian AIDS Society is not done alone, each year we work with many partners to develop programs, participate in group activities and provide services to our members. Throughout the year we work with a diverse and representative group of individuals seeking to address HIV/AIDS in Canada.

These partnerships include:

- CAS is an active participant of the HIV and Aging Working Group, housed at the

Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation (CWGHR). Throughout the year we participate in teleconferences and share important resources within the group to address this emerging and important issue.

- Working with partners in Hepatitis C, CAS joined Action Hepatitis Canada (AHC) and has become active in their board and executive. This is an important partnership, where advocacy and public policy are a part of AHC's agenda. Additionally CAS was an active participant in the planning committee for World Hepatitis Day, housed at the Canadian Society for International Health (CSIH).
- The National HIV/AIDS Partners come together frequently throughout the year to share work-plans and update one another on activities. Throughout the year this body works to ensure that priority issues are lead by identified project leads, with all partners providing input where necessary.
- CAS participates in research projects such as CAAN's Family Matters project, a series of talking circles that explore the impact of HIV/AIDS on Aboriginal Families; and the Resonance Project - an exploration of how gay men acquire and assimilate prevention information from various sources.
- In the area of hepatitis C, CAS has been working with other stakeholders to improve the response to hepatitis C. CAS partnered with CAHR in the delivery of their Cafe Scientifique on HIV and HCV Coinfection and worked with CSIH to give voice to people living with Hep C during the consultations on the funding model.

Advocacy

Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada

As this issue has been identified as a priority by CAS' membership repeatedly over the past decade, we dedicate significant resources and time to ensuring that the response to HIV/AIDS in Canada remains a priority for all political parties. During the year, we take every opportunity possible to be in contact with Parliamentarians at the federal level to ensure that HIV/AIDS funding is secure.

During 2014-15 we were very involved in organizing consultations on the Community Action Fund - the proposed new funding initiative for HIV/AIDS programs and services. We organized conference calls between the federal government and persons living with HIV, persons living with HCV and member groups, to provide input on and get information about the funding structure. We are committed to ensuring that GIPA principles are incorporated into the new model.

Throughout the year, CAS also acted swiftly to respond to individual concerns with regards to funding support, including a number of groups that did not receive payments on time. We continue to push PHAC for updates and changes to this model.

Anti-stigma Campaign

Throughout the year, CAS had the opportunity to meet with the federal Minister of Health - the Honourable Rona Ambrose - to discuss concerns and issues affecting the community. Each time the issue of Stigma and Discrimination came up as a major concern, and it was quickly agreed that Canada needs a national anti-stigma campaign. Funding for this initiative has been identified by the Public Health Agency of Canada, and 2015 will see the roll out of a national anti-stigma campaign.

Canadian Blood Services

In 2013, Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec received approval from the regulator of Canada's blood system, Health Canada, to reduce the deferral period for men who have sex with men (MSM) from an indefinite period to five years following their last sexual contact with a man. The Canadian AIDS Society was a major actor in this decision, and has committed to ensuring that the issue of MSM deferral continues to be reviewed and addressed by Canadian Blood Services. Our efforts will continue to ensure that the Canadian Blood Supply remains safe, and that individuals are not discriminated against when they go to give blood.

Innovation Panel

In 2015 the Minister of Health established a time-limited Advisory Panel on Healthcare Innovation. During 2015 there was a call for submissions to help identify the top 5 healthcare innovations in Canada. The Canadian AIDS Society developed a brief for this committee, outlining the importance of community-based responses as a Canadian Healthcare Innovation. The paper detailed such innovations from within the HIV/AIDS movement as The GIPA Principle, organizing from advocacy, treatment access and the role of culturally specific responses.

The World Health Organization's Commission of the Social Determinants of Health in 2008 called for action for all governments, civil society and voluntary sector to address these health inequities and we have responded.

Through shared power and inclusion in decision-making, community members gain a voice and opportunities to make decisions in the best interest of the communities and themselves.

Minister of Health

The Canadian AIDS Society has invested a lot of energy and effort into developing a good relationship with the Minister of Health, evidenced by her attendance at both the International AIDS Conference in Australia and the CAS Annual Rouge Gala. During her presence at the 2014 Gala, the Minister was so enthralled by the key note address from CAS Board Youth Director - Mr. Ahmed Bechir Habré - that she insisted on a meeting with him to follow up on the needs of the community in responding to the challenges faced by Youth living with HIV/AIDS.

This meeting has resulted in the Youth Forum that is gathering at the 2015 Annual Meeting and Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Forum.

Red Ribbon on the Hill

This year, during AIDS Awareness Week, CAS and Abbvie hosted a reception for all Parliamentarians and Senators to come and meet with our CEO, Chair and Staff to discuss the needs of Canadians regarding HIV and AIDS. This is not only an opportunity to share a red ribbon with each person in attendance, but it is also an opportunity to reach all political parties with a message of awareness and attention to the still essential issues that need to be addressed to improve the lives of people living with and at risk of HIV/AIDS.

Community Engagement

Capacity Building Webinars

As a part of our work funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) CAS is supported to provide capacity building opportunities to persons living with HIV/AIDS, our members, associates and other stakeholders. During the year we have had many interesting discussions and learning opportunities. One capacity building webinar featured skills for writing proposals and fund development; San Patten was the presenter. Another call brought together people living with HIV/AIDS to discuss the issues related to aging with HIV/AIDS, and was done in partnership with CWGHR. As previously mentioned, our other webinars were opportunities for persons living with HIV/AIDS to participate in discussions about federal funding opportunities.

Medical Cannabis Webinars

The Canadian AIDS Society is honoured to be working on a project funded by Tweed. The goal of this project has been to provide information about Cannabis to various stakeholders, in both official languages. To date, there have been four webinars, in French and English on the topics of The Science, and The Law, with a final presentation to be hosted in June of 2015 on Safer Use and Better Health.

Building on the wealth of knowledge that we have collected about the use of Cannabis by persons living with HIV/AIDS, we have developed these webinars, which are available on-line, to provide better understanding on the science, law and use of medical Cannabis.

Additionally, during the year we developed a paper on a research project on the medical use of Cannabis, and have participated as co-intervenors in a Supreme Court case that is looking at access to edible Cannabis products.

AIDS 2014

The International AIDS Society's International AIDS Conference was held in Melbourne Australia this year and CAS was present, once again, providing a showcase for Canada's response to HIV/AIDS.



Throughout the course of the conference individuals visiting the booth were invited to share their wishes on a maple leaf which was adhered to the booth wall, on what quickly became known as the *Stop Stigma Tree*. The leaves and wishes from the tree have been preserved, based on a request from an 8-year old participant (who did not want her wish to be lost) these leaves will become a part of the 2016 time capsule, preserved until there is a cure.

Also at the International AIDS Conference, the booth became a showcase for best practices, with some of Canada's top researchers in HIV and AIDS shared their work with visiting participants. We distributed wrist bands with USB drives filled with Canadian resources at the conference to visiting delegates, ensuring that the Canadian response to HIV/AIDS is available internationally.



Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life

The Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life is an annual fund-raiser brought to CAS members through a partnership with the AIDS Committee of Toronto, Positive Living Society of British Columbia and CAS. Working in partnership, these groups meet biweekly throughout the year to deliver a national awareness and fundraising campaign every September. Working with the generous support of our sponsors, listed at the right, we developed a national campaign, featuring celebrity comedian and actor, Scott Thompson.

With over 1.8 million raised in 2014, this event remains an important fund-raiser for 43 organizations, and with over 11,000 participants across the country, we are confident that the message of awareness is reaching new audiences every year.

Resource Development

Trans Toolkit

The Canadian AIDS Society, working with an advisory committee 12 individuals, has developed a new resource for Community-based Organizations seeking to ensure that their programs and services are trans-inclusive. With documents about sexual health, developing forms for trans-inclusion, a glossary of terms, steps for making your organization more trans-inclusive, and a gender toolkit, the collection is available for order or download on our website at www.cdn aids.ca/trans.

Young Women's Sexual Health Resources

With the generous support of Gilead and Bristol-Meyers Squibb, CAS was able to develop a tool kit of resources for young women. Working with a dozen people on the advisory committee, the tool kit consists of a series of fact sheets on the following topics:

- Disclosure

- Injection Drugs and Harm Reduction
- Preventing Vertical Transmission of HIV
- Smart Sex: Context and Communication
- Women, Biology and HIV.

We have also developed a Prezi Presentation available at tiny.cc/CASprezi.

Hepatitis C Survey

With the support of Merck, CAS was funded in late 2014 to begin work on a survey of the lived experience of people living with and affected by hepatitis C. This survey will be based on a model developed in 2012 when CAS participated in a Merck funded survey of persons living with HIV/AIDS. An advisory committee for this work was struck in 2014-15 and the real work will begin in 2015 with the development and implementation of the survey across Canada. Keep an eye open for communications from CAS about this upcoming survey.

Peerology

The Canadian AIDS Society has been funded by the M*A*C AIDS Fund to develop a resource on community engagement with people who use drugs. We have been working for the past year with a group of people who use drugs to develop this resource, and it will be launched shortly at the Alberta Harm Reduction Conference.

In the model of the One Foot Forward Series, the resource provides guidance for people who use drugs on a variety of community engagement areas. Each chapter was written by a team of people who use drugs, providing lived experience and examples of engagement. Topics include:

- Leadership By People who use Drugs
- Leadership Training
- Getting Involved
- The human touch: Self-care and developing a sense of community
- Setting up programs by and for people who use drugs.

Communications and Awareness

Social Media

The Canadian AIDS Society maintains an active social media presence on several popular social media channels including Twitter (@CDNAIDS), Facebook (www.facebook.ca/aidsida) and a Blog (cdnaids.blogspot.ca). With thousands of followers on these platforms, we are



growing our reach every day.

During the year we produced 714 tweets, were retweeted 426 times, and had over 560,000 impressions, and as of May, 2015 we have 1,835 followers.

Facebook has been instrumental in our communications plans with 258 stories posted during the year, we were share 509 times and received 210,120,435 impressions.

HIVolume

HIVolume is CAS' members only newsletter, featuring articles about CAS programs and services. It is released every six weeks. We have featured some amazing content over the course of the year, including:

- Calls for participation for CAS activities
- Feature articles on regional responses to HIV/AIDS
- Communications and updates from Member organizations.

World AIDS Day Awareness Campaign

In 2014 CAS worked with Naked Creative, and our national advisory committee to develop and deliver a national awareness campaign focussed on young gay men, and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Using an extraordinarily creative poster depicting a series of on-line dating ads, individuals were encouraged to learn more about HIV prevention in the new millennium. A campaign landing page featured information about risk calculation, Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), condom use and testing. The campaign can be viewed at www.cdnaids.ca/safer. All components of the campaign were focus tested with a group of young gay men.

For the first time, CAS made use of an on-line advertising opportunity, of advertising on a dating platform called Grindr. This small investment yielded 7,620,210 impressions on the Grindr platform, with over 40,000 click throughs to the campaign site.

World Hepatitis Day

The Canadian Society for International Health co-ordinated this July awareness day, and CAS participated in the planning committee for the Ottawa event, as well as roll-outs across the country. Speaking at the Ottawa World Hepatitis Day Event, CAS spoke of the need for collaboration, and sharing of best ideas and approaches – with the knowledge that together, we can move toward reducing global health inequalities and easing the lives of people living with these infections and diseases.

Golf Tournament

Every year, CAS is gifted with the presentation of an Ottawa-based golf tournament hosted by The Lord Elgin Hotel and their partners in the Hotel Industry in Ottawa. This event has become known for its excellent apres-golf reception, with a generous meal provided by Lord Elgin Hotel, and a silent auction and raffle

with gifts to suite all.

The 2014 tournament, held in August, brought another beautiful day on the greens for participants from across the region.

Canadian AIDS Memorial Quilt

Now that the majority of quilts have been brought back together at CAS, we have begun the task of curation and photographing the panels. Working with a professional photographer from Creatris Media, we are having the individual panels scanned in 3 dimensions, using advance technology created for Google Maps. The photographs will provide museum quality images that will be shared with the Canadian Human Rights Museum in preparation for the hosting of a panel of the quilt at the Mylan Relay for Hope stop in Winnipeg. Additionally these photos will be featured on an updated website, in the works for the Canadian AIDS Memorial Quilt. CAS has also designed a thank-you award for the volunteers who worked with the Names Project Canada.

World AIDS Day Gala

The 8th Annual World AIDS Day Gala was held in Ottawa, on December 01, 2014. In attendance were Parliamentarians, the Minister of Health, several Senators and many supporters of CAS from across the Country.

The key note address was given by Mr. Ahmed Bechir Habré who held the room enraptured by his very personal story of growing up as an HIV positive youth.

Also at the Gala, there was an announcement the beginning of a partnership between CAS and Mylan Pharmaceuticals - the Mylan Relay for Hope - a national awareness and fund-raiser for the Canadian AIDS Society and the Elton John AIDS Foundation.

