

June 30, 2022



The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Health

Health Canada

Sent via email:

hccminister.ministresc@canada.ca

jean-yves.duclos@parl.gc.ca

Re: National Consensus Statement signed by the National Advocates group and Canada's Community-based and human rights agencies.

Honourable Minister Duclos:

Canada's goal to end HIV as a public health threat in this country by 2030 can be achieved.

On December 1st, 2021, World AIDS Day, the Government of Canada proudly announced it would host the world at the 24th International AIDS Conference in Montréal, happening July 29 to August 2, 2022.

Prior to this conference, we, the undersigned agencies, strongly urge the Government of Canada to announce an increase in federal funding for HIV (*alone*), commensurate with the 2019 Standing Committee on Health (HESA) [Recommendation 20](#) to increase HIV funding to \$100 million per year to address HIV/AIDS. Additional, separate funding support is also required to address hepatitis C and other STBBIs. Further, we urge the Government of Canada to re-invigorate its focus and political will to deliver an equitable, anti-racist action plan focused on HIV and AIDS that includes the necessary resources to ensure everyone has access to HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support by 2030.

At the 2016, International AIDS Conference in South Africa, the Government of Canada took centre stage alongside global policymakers, researchers and people living with HIV or AIDS and rallied with other international leaders around the [UNAIDS targets](#) to ensure 90% of people living with HIV were aware of their status, 90% of those who know their status are on an antiretroviral treatment (ART), and 90% of those on have a suppressed viral load.

In this same year, the Government of Canada signed on to the 2020 UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets to ensure that by 2020:

- 90% of people in Canada living with HIV are aware of their status;
- 90% of those are on an antiretroviral treatment (ART);
- 90% of those have a suppressed viral load.

Canada continues to fall behind other OECD countries, who have achieved their 90-90-90 goals and have increased their targets.

The latest Canadian surveillance data from four years ago (PHAC, 2018) monitoring our progress in meeting this pledge indicate Canada is lagging behind other developed nations:

- 87% of people in Canada living with HIV aware of their status;
- 85% of those are on ART;
- 94% of those have a suppressed viral load.

In 2018, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) estimated a total of 62,050 people in Canada are living with HIV or AIDS. As rates of HIV continue to rise in Canada, a stagnated funding portfolio coupled with worsening of the drug poisoning crisis and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic have only further destabilised Canada's community-based HIV response. Meanwhile, thousands of new infections are identified annually. Because many provinces have reported a drop in HIV testing over the past two years, recent and accurate data detailing current rates of new HIV infections following COVID-19 shut-downs are not presently available.

In 2019, the Government of Canada launched the Five-Year Action Plan on Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections (STBBI). This strategy aimed to accelerate the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections and reduce the health impacts of these infections for people across the country. This framework, which expires in 2024, was launched with no formal activities or resources attached, and has missed its own strategy evaluation deadline. This has meant Canada is also falling behind in its commitments to address hepatitis C and other STBBIs.

In 2021, Canada participated in the UNAIDS political declaration on HIV and AIDS: Ending Inequalities and Getting on Track to End AIDS by 2030. Through this initiative, UNAIDS set ambitious targets, design and implement specific national strategies on HIV and AIDS. Further, in June 2021 UNAIDS adopted a set of new and ambitious targets from 90-90-90 to 95-95-95 and included an additional target for countries to deliver on universal medication access providing effective HIV combination prevention options to 95%.

The International AIDS Conference (IAC) 2022 in Montreal will bring together people living with HIV and AIDS, community-based organisations, scientists, clinicians, advocates, and global change-makers. Throughout the pre-conference and conference activities, all

eyes will be on the current status of Canada’s response to HIV. It is critical that Canada’s Minister of Health and other senior government officials attend and fulsomely participate in IAC 2022 by acknowledging Canada’s lack of progress and demonstrating a strong commitment to the next phase of its HIV response.

Achieving our shared goals is possible, but swift action that includes funding, focused strategy, and a renewed political will to end this epidemic is needed.

At this year’s 24th International AIDS Conference in Montreal we, the undersigned agencies, urge the Government of Canada to announce increased funding to \$100 million per year for HIV (*alone*) as supported by the 2019 HESA Recommendation 20. This funding will significantly reduce the burden of HIV—disproportionately affecting Black, Indigenous, and other racialized people; gay and bisexual men, and men who have sex with men; and the increasing number of women being diagnosed—at the community, health systems, and social support systems.

Pending new investments and re-invigorated political engagement, we, the undersigned, are well positioned to collaborate with and fully support the Government of Canada in the creation and implementation of a national HIV action plan to reinvigorate and stabilize Canada’s HIV response, and to support Canada in reaching its UNAIDS targets by 2030.

We look forward to your timely response.

Signatories by region:

National Advocates group

1. Action Hepatitis Canada
2. AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador (ACNL)
3. Atlantic Interdisciplinary Research Network (AIRN)
4. Alberta Community Council on HIV (ACCH)
5. All Nations Hope
6. CAAN Communities, Alliances & Networks (CAAN)
7. Canadian AIDS Society (CAS)
8. Canadian Positive People Network (CPPN)
9. CATIE
10. Coalition des organismes communautaires québécois de lutte contre le sida (COCQ-SIDA)
11. Community Based Research Centre (CBRC)
12. Dr. Peter Centre
13. HIV Legal Network

14. Nine Circles
15. Ontario AIDS Network (OAN)
16. PAN (Pacific AIDS Network)
17. Phoenix Society
18. Realize Canada
19. Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights (National Advocates collaborator)

Atlantic Region

1. AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia (ACNS)
2. Avenue B Harm Reduction
3. Healing our Nations
4. Mainline Needle Exchange Harm Reduction Program
5. Northern Healthy Connections Society

Québec Region

1. Bureau de lutte aux infections transmises sexuellement et par le sang
2. IRIS Estrie
3. L'Anonyme, Québec
4. L'ARCHE de l'Estrie
5. Le DISPENSAIRE Centre de santé communautaire | CSA
6. Maison Plein Coeur
7. MIELS-Québec (Mouvement d'information et d'entraide pour la lutte au VIH-sida)
8. Portail VIH/sida du Québec
9. Réseau de la Santé Sexuelle des Sourds du Québec
10. Centre D'Action Sida Montréal

Ontario Region

1. (Oahas) Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy
2. 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nation
3. ACCKWA – The AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area
4. Action Positive
5. African and Caribbean Council and HIV/AIDS in Ontario (ACCHO)
6. Africans in Partnership Against AIDS (APAA)
7. AIDS Committee of North Bay and Area (ACNB)
8. AIDS Committee of Ottawa (ACO)
9. AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT)
10. Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)
11. Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS)
12. Bruce House
13. CAYR Community Connections
14. Elevate Northwestern Ontario
15. Fife House

16. HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario (HALCO)
17. HIV/AIDS Resources and Community Health (ARCH)
18. Let's Stop AIDS
19. MOYO Health and Community Services
20. Peterborough AIDS Resource Network (PARN)
21. Positive Living Niagara
22. Pozitive Pathways Community Services
23. Regional HIV/AIDS Connection (RHAC)
24. Réseau ACCESS Network
25. The AIDS Committee of Durham Region (ACDR)
26. The AIDS Network
27. The Teresa Group
28. Toronto HIV/AIDS Network
29. Toronto People with AIDS Foundation (PWA)
30. Trellis HIV & Community Care
31. Women's Health in Women's Hands (WHIWH)

British Columbia, Yukon Territory, and Prairie Regions

1. AIDS Vancouver (AV)
2. ANKORS: AIDS Network, Outreach and Support Society
3. ASK Wellness Society
4. AVI Health and Community Services
5. BC Hepatitis Network (BCHN)
6. BGC Williams Lake Club
7. Blood Ties Four Directions Centre
8. Central Interior Native Health Society (CINHS)
9. Coalition of Substance Users of the North (CSUN)
10. Positive Living North – Smithers
11. Positive Living North: No khēyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society (PLN)
12. Prairie Harm Reduction
13. Prince George New Hope Society
14. The Heart of Richmond AIDS Society (HORAS)
15. The Vancouver Friends For Life Society
16. YouthCO HIV & Hep C Society