

Invitation to Transgender Community Members to Join a Transgender Needs Assessment Community Advisory Committee

The Canadian AIDS Society is in the process of seeking individuals with transgender community knowledge and experience to actively participate in a Transgender Needs Assessment Community Advisory Committee. **We especially encourage applications from trans people and/or people living with HIV.**

The Community Advisory Committee will actively guide a needs assessment survey, key informant interviews, community dissemination and outreach strategies, recommendations for future action and the development of tools and resources, as well as assess the learning and training needs of transgender and HIV/AIDS community serving organizations and health care providers to increase their effectiveness with transgender clients. The project will be completed by March 31, 2014.

Background

In 2011, the Gathering of Spirits: Canadian Women, Trans People and Girls' HIV Research Collaborative (Gathering of Spirits) identified transgender-specific needs as a priority area for national research and action. In response and to develop the initial national priorities for research and action, the Canadian AIDS Society will be conducting a national Transgender Needs Assessment to survey the current landscape for transgender individuals in Canada and the level of awareness around their needs and concerns, and to begin understanding their perspectives and preferences around HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support. A national community-based Community Advisory Committee is being established to ensure that the Canadian trans community is involved in the development, implementation, interpretation and the dissemination of the needs assessment.

Roles and Responsibilities of Committee Members

- Participate in monthly teleconference meetings - dates and times determined by group availability
 - Participate to the degree possible in the recruitment, information-dissemination and networking activities of the project; and
 - Provide the Committee with guidance and input on project activities including work plans, communication and dissemination strategies and project evaluation.
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A CAS Program Consultant will facilitate and provide support for the committee and project.

Why is this important?

In Canada and globally, transgender people are strongly infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. As Canada's population of transgender individuals continues to become more visible, new concerns and needs are beginning to emerge and the demand for welcoming, transgender-specific or sensitive services is rising dramatically. At the same time, many transgender individuals requiring support and services remain hidden because of stigma and discrimination. Transgender people face unique obstacles and continue to be at an increased risk for poverty, violence, homelessness, incarceration, mental health and substance use issues. They also experience challenges in accessing basic community and health services, increasing their vulnerability to HIV. Overall, the complex issues and needs of transgendered people with respect to HIV prevention, as well as treatment, care and support are largely under-studied, un-documented and unknown.

Why get involved?

Our Transgender Community Advisory Committee is a great opportunity to influence transgender HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support policies and interact with thoughtful community members from across the country. The Trans Community Advisory Board and its work will help CAS better tailor its resources to meet the needs of Transgender people and allow us to provide community members, advocacy and service organizations, policy makers, health care providers, and other stakeholders with a much-needed window into what transgendered people feel are the real issues facing them.

In you are interested in being considered for this Community Advisory Committee:

Please send an email to Suzanne Boileau at Suzanneb@cdnaids.ca or a letter to the address below **by September 14, 2012** with your name, contact information and a brief description of your trans community knowledge and/or personal experience. Selected committee members will be notified by September 21st, 2012. **All expressions of interest received will be held in the strictest confidence.**

If you have any questions, please contact Suzanne by email or by telephone at 1.800.499.1986 ext 123.

Suzanne Boileau

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The Canadian AIDS Society (CAS) The Canadian AIDS Society is a national coalition of over 120 community-based AIDS organizations from across Canada. Dedicated to strengthening the response to HIV/AIDS across all sectors of society, we also work to enrich the lives of people and communities living with HIV/AIDS. We accomplish this by advocating on behalf of people and communities affected by HIV/AIDS, facilitating the development of programs, services and resources for our member groups, and providing a national framework for community-based participation in Canada's response to AIDS.

The mandate of CAS is to speak as a national voice and act as a forum for a community-based response to HIV infection, as well as to advocate for persons so affected; and to act as a resource for our member organizations and coordinate community-based participation in a national strategy on HIV and AIDS.
