

For immediate release

December 13, 2013

Positive Living BC's Peer Navigation Services recognized as Leading Practice by Accreditation Canada

Vancouver, BC: Positive Living BC today announced that its Peer Navigation Services program at St. Paul's Hospital's John Ruedy Immunodeficiency Clinic (IDC) was awarded Leading Practice status by Accreditation Canada. This is the first and only HIV peer-to-peer program in Canada to receive such recognition for its work in a clinical setting.

Peer Navigation Services connects professionally trained HIV-positive Peer Navigators to people newly diagnosed with HIV and those who may have been living with HIV for a long time but who are currently not accessing healthcare. Peer Navigators use their lived experience with HIV to help others improve their ability to manage their own health and care. The program was launched in partnership with the IDC and the [STOP HIV/AIDS](#) initiative in 2011.

Accreditation Canada is a not-for-profit, independent organization that provides national and international health care organizations with an external peer review process to assess and improve patient services based on standards of excellence. Leading Practices are noteworthy examples of high-quality leadership and service delivery. A Leading Practice must be:

- 1) Linked to Accreditation Canada standards
- 2) Innovative and creative
- 3) Client- or family-centred
- 4) Evaluated
- 5) Able to demonstrate intended results
- 6) Sustainable
- 7) Adaptable by other organizations

"Peer empowerment is a cornerstone of the HIV movement," says John Bishop, Chair of Positive Living BC. "At the beginning of the epidemic, when even the medical community knew little about the disease, people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) turned to each other for support, guidance and care. Much about the disease and its treatment has changed since then. Yet the benefits of peer-to-peer interaction and knowledge transfer remain. For Accreditation Canada to recognize Peer Navigation Services as a Leading Practice in HIV health care represents a meaningful step forward for BC's HIV-positive community."

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The Positive Living Society of British Columbia exists to enable persons living with AIDS and HIV disease to empower themselves through mutual support and collective action.