

+ POSITIVE DISPATCH

NEW SLETTER OF THE AIDS COALITION OF NOVA SCOTIA · SPRING 2017

Welcome Dena Simon!

We are very excited to welcome our new Executive Director, Dena Simon! Dena is originally from Halifax and has over 30 years experience in the not-for-profit sector. During that time she has worked in health, sciences and the arts. Most recently she was the President of the Atlantic Division of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, and before that, the Director of Operations at the Discovery Centre. Dena is easy-going and loves working with people. In her spare time she enjoys watching movies, reading, and travelling. Please feel free to stop by and say hello or contact her at ed@acns.ns.ca or (902) 425-4882 ext 227.

In Memoriam



A Queen to Remember

Studio X LeNoir, also known as David MacDonald, passed away April 18, 2017.

She was the first reigning Empress of the Imperial Sovereign Court of Atlantic Nova Society and was past reigning Mz. Studio, Mz. Eagle and Mz. Reflections. There have been many awards in her name given to people in the community as well as community organizations.

A fabulous memorial service was held on May 6. Many people

attended in full drag. It was said to have been a wonderful celebration that included the many facets of Studio and David.

She was incredibly talented and is considered a legend by many. She was known as a beautiful person inside and out and was a huge supporter of many community organizations, including ACNS. She is dearly missed.

Celebrating the life of a HIV/AIDS Trailblazer

Dr. Mark Wainberg was 71 years old when he passed away April 11, 2017. He is remembered by many as an outstanding HIV researcher and patient advocate.

Dr. Wainberg's son - Zev Wainberg - says that the loss of his father is a loss for the whole world. "How many people in this world can say their work saved millions of lives?"

When the AIDS epidemic was beginning in the 1980s, Wainberg became an outspoken supporter for people with HIV. He started the first AIDS labs in Canada, which grew to be among the largest in the country. He was eventually part of the medical team that discovered the first antiviral drug to treat patients with HIV. He was inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame in 2015.



Holiday Hours

Our office will be **closed on Monday, May 22nd** for Victoria Day and we will be **re-opening on Tuesday, May 23rd at 10:00am**. Should you require assistance during this period, contact 211 for information about government and local community programs and services; HealthLink at 811 to speak with a nurse about non-emergency health information or referrals to other services; Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team at 1-800-429-8167 for mental health crisis support; Mobile Outreach Street Health at 429-5290 for on-site health care services (in Halifax only). For a medical emergency, please go to your nearest hospital.

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia will be holding our Annual General Meeting on **Thursday June 15, 2017 at 5:30pm**. It is taking place at our office on 5516 Spring Garden Road, Suite 200, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. During the meeting, a special resolution regarding changes to the By-Laws will be voted upon. All are welcome and encouraged to join us. We hope to see you there!



The Carnation Clinic

The Carnation Clinic is a new massage clinic set to open up in September. Alexandra Lynch, our current volunteer massage therapist for the past 17 years, will be supervising it. The clinic is designed as a way to provide very low-cost massage service to people living with HIV/AIDS. In recognition that HIV/AIDS affects more than just the individual, services are open to partners and family members as well. Client confidentiality is very important and so the clinic will have a discrete name and will be in a location with other clinics that have clients who are not HIV positive.

- Clinics will be **Mondays** for 12 weeks, starting August 28th - November 13th, 2017 (excluding Thanksgiving Monday, Oct. 10th)
- Cost will be \$10 inc. tax for **75 minute appointments** which includes intake by a student therapist.
- Appointment times are at **4:30pm or 6:00 pm**.
- You may call **902-832-3268** or email cliniccoordinator@collegeofmassage.com to add your name to the list

Join Our Board

The Board of Directors of ACNS is seeking new members. We are committed to greater involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS and we invite you to consider joining us as an important part of ACNS.

The ACNS Board of Directors is involved in the governance of the organization in the areas of policy and the development of the organization's vision and strategic directions. We are a policy board that follows the Carver Model. There are 5 key areas of Board responsibility: strategic planning, policy development, finance, board recruitment and development, and community relations. We see Board leadership as a critical factor in the future success of ACNS. We seek new, dynamic, and skilled individuals who are motivated and committed to help ACNS continue forward on its path.

We look forward to hearing from you, answering your questions, and discussing your interests. For more information please contact Suzanne Kennedy – Chair of the ACNS Board of Directors at suzannekennedy@yahoo.com.

Scotiabank AIDS Walk



As the largest fundraiser for the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia, the Scotiabank AIDS Walk brings together a community of supporters to help people living and affected by HIV/AIDS.

On Sunday, September 24, 2017, hundreds of participants will walk to fight against the stigma that surrounds those affected by HIV/AIDS. Understanding, respect and acceptance tie us together as a community where those living with and affected by HIV/AIDS have a better life.

Join us for an all-inclusive afternoon full of carnival activities, entertainment, a BBQ, and walking. The event will be hosted by the 101.3 Virgin Radio Halifax morning crew at the Pavilion Site, at the Central Common. Registration starts @ 12:30 pm and the Walk @ 2:00 pm.

Register online at www.scotiabankaidswalk.ca as an individual walker, team captain or a team member. Not able to access the online portal? Please email fund@acns.ns.ca or call 902-425.4882/ext. 228 to get your pledges and start fundraising offline. Are you short of ideas how to raise money? Give us a call or write us an email and we will help you achieve your goal.

Like us on Facebook: Scotiabank AIDS Walk Halifax, or follows us on twitter: @AIDS_NS for updates! #ScotiabankAIDSWalk #tiedtogether #stigmafighter

Promoting PrEP in Nova Scotia



In 2016, Health Canada approved the anti-retroviral Truvada for PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis). When taken once daily, PrEP is up to 99 percent effective in preventing HIV transmission, making it more effective than condom use. ACNS recently added a PrEP information page for both the general public, and for health care providers (see: www.acns.ns.ca/prep). Many people have not yet heard of PrEP or, if they have, are not sure what to make of it. As well, many healthcare providers are unsure of how to proceed when a patient asks them about PrEP.

Despite overwhelming evidence that PrEP is effective in preventing HIV, many healthcare providers are unaware of PrEP, or unsure of how to proceed when there is still not a formal PrEP protocol in Canada, and people seeking PrEP have reported resistance when asking their physicians about it. ACNS has been working with the Nova Scotia PrEP Working Group to find ways to better educate physicians and other healthcare providers about PrEP, as we know it will become a much

bigger part of the HIV prevention landscape in the years ahead.

Setting up the web site is our first public formal step in promoting PrEP in Nova Scotia. There are still many obstacles (uninformed and/or resistant healthcare providers, cost of the medication, formal Canadian guidelines for administering PrEP are still in development, etc.), however educating healthcare providers is a crucial first step. The web page launch was timed to coincide with a brief article (submitted by the PrEP Working Group) introducing PrEP to family physicians that was published in the April issue of the provincial newsletter doctorsNS, and listing the web page as a key local PrEP information resource.

People who may benefit from PrEP include those who:

- Are HIV-negative, but have HIV-positive partner (s)
- in sexual activity with known increased risks for HIV transmission, including:
 - ◇ Inconsistent or no condom use
 - ◇ Previous diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
 - ◇ Exchanging sex for money, food, shelter or drugs
 - ◇ Having sex with partners with an unknown HIV status
 - ◇ Are incarcerated
 - ◇ People who share needles to inject

Proper management of PrEP requires that healthcare providers:

- Respect a patient's autonomy to choose prevention methods that will work for them
- Test for HIV before prescribing
- Test for hepatitis B before starting, and monitor kidney function during therapy
- Encourage strict adherence (one tablet daily)
- Have patients commit to clinic visits every three months to test for HIV and STIs, monitor for side effects, and reinforce dosing adherence and risk-reduction counseling

For information regarding physicians in NS who will consult on prescribing PrEP, visit: www.acns.ns.ca/prep. For additional information on PrEP, visit: www.catie.ca/en/prevention/statements/prep. If you have questions or concerns re PrEP that are not covered on the web page, please contact the Gay Men's Health Coordinator at gmmc@acns.ns.ca or 1-800-566-2437, ext. 222 or 902-425-4882 ext. 222.

Participate in Research - Positive Plus One



The deadline for PHAs to participate in Positive Plus One has been extended. Are you in a relationship where one partner is HIV positive and the other person is HIV negative or have you been in a sero-discordant relationship in the past two years? Interested in participating in a 30 min survey?

If you would like to participate in the study, please go to www.PositivePlusOne.ca or call 1-888-740-1166.

Reminder of the eligibility criteria:

1. You are currently in a relationship where one partner is HIV-positive and the other is HIV-negative and the relationship has lasted 3 months or longer, OR you were in one in the past 2 years,
2. You live in Canada, and lived in Canada during the relationship,
3. You are at least 18 years old,
4. You speak and/or read and write in English,
5. If you are HIV-positive, you have disclosed your status to your HIV-negative partner.

For your participation, you will receive a \$20 gift card to your choice of Tim Horton's, Walmart, Subway, or Canadian Tire. The gift card can be mailed directly to you or "in care of" you at ACNS.

Totally OUTright Program Gets Funding

ACNS completed its very successful pilot of the sexual health leadership training program Totally OUTright back in February. We have now confirmed that Totally OUTright will be a core piece of our HIV/STBBI (Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections) prevention programming for Gay, Bi, Two-Spirit, Trans* and Queer men moving forward (and will be a joint project with AIDS PEI). We have confirmed Public Health Agency of Canada funding to offer this program again in spring of 2018, 2019 and 2020.

The 2018 and 2020 offerings of Totally OUTright will be for men aged 18-29 (as was the pilot), and the 2019 offering will be a pilot of an adapted version for men aged 30-49 to be developed in partnership with Vancouver's Community-Based Research Centre for Gay Men's Health (CBRC) who created the original Totally OUTright program. For information about this program, contact the Gay Men's Health Coordinator at GMHC@acns.ns.ca or 1-800-566-2437, ext. 222 or 902-425-4882 ext. 222

HIV Cure Using CRISPR Gene Editing?

Recent media reports about the CRISPR study are not the first time (or second, or third) that "AIDS Has Been Cured". And still... it's not quite true. However, it's not just HIV/AIDS research the media routinely misinterprets: all medical research is complex, and progress is painfully slow even when things are going well. Unfortunately the vast majority of the time, journalists writing these stories don't really understand the research they are writing about to begin with. As well, sensational stories grab headlines, so the sensational stories are more likely to get shared over the balanced and informed articles that explain the complexity, and limitations, of the latest finding (including it being just step #5 in a series of 100 or 1000 or more...).

So, yes, research is complex, and slow. However, progress in getting closer to a "functional" cure for HIV IS being made! Just take the media headlines with a big grain of salt. To get a good overview of what the recent CRISPR study does, and does not prove, check out this overview from the Body.com (an excellent online resource): <http://tinyurl.com/CRISPR-HIVCURE>

HIV and Aging Videos Released

REALIZE (formerly known as the Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation or CWGHR) has just produced three short YouTube videos on HIV and aging:

- to increase the visibility of older adults within the broader community of people living with HIV; and
- to raise awareness of some of the assets, needs and experiences of this diverse group

Each of the short videos profiles one older person living with HIV. Two have been living long-term with HIV and one was diagnosed in older adulthood.

- "Being undetectable, I'm not infectious" - John: <https://youtu.be/id-JcFwRYX0>
- "Am I aging like others are aging?" - Mary: <https://youtu.be/kW61mZpMmQQ>
- "I intend to be here a while" - Glyn: <https://youtu.be/BELLjoqX5SY>



No Matter the Gender: IDAHaT 2017



May 17 is International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia (IDAHaT). Montreal's Fondation Émergence has launched its 2017 IDAHaT campaign "No Matter the Gender" highlighting the reality of trans* people in a truly international manner! In addition to French and English materials (for which you can order printed posters and brochures for a requested donation), they have also made materials available in nine other

languages to audiences around the world in digital versions. For more information go to: <https://www.homophobie.org/en/>

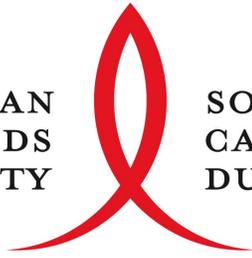
Making Ends Meet



Our Making Ends Meet program provides a variety of hygiene products that each member can have access to once a month. Thankfully, we recently received several generous donations so our supply is topped up with many new products. You can stop in during our office hours from Monday to Friday 10:00am-4:00pm.

Have Your Voice Heard

CANADIAN
AIDS
SOCIETY



SOCIÉTÉ
CANADIENNE
DU SIDA

The Canadian AIDS Society (CAS) is a national voice for people living with HIV/AIDS and represents our members at the national level. It is a movement built at the grassroots level. CAS represents community based HIV/AIDS organizations across Canada. The objective is to strengthen the response to HIV/AIDS in Canada and enrich the lives of people and communities living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Mike Sangster is the Vice-Chair and the Regional Atlantic PLWHIV Director on the Canadian AIDS Society (CAS) Board of Directors. The CAS Regional PLWHIV Directors are HIV positive persons who strive to bring the issues of HIV positive individuals in each of the five regions of Canada to the CAS Board of Directors. As the Atlantic Region's PLWHIV Director he is responsible to bring your issues to CAS. If you have any issue that affects you as a HIV positive person that you feel needs to be brought to CAS's attention

please contact him at (mikes@cndaids.ca) or contact CAS at the below contact information.

Osteopathy Program Extended

Martha Faron has committed another 6 months to ACNS members. The members who have had osteopathy appointments with Martha were highly impressed and felt much better after the appointment. Osteopathy helps with pain (anywhere in the body), posture issues, circulation problems, stress, depression, anxiety, and so much more. Call Lori, the Support Services Coordinator, at (902)425-4882/1-800-566-2437 ext. 225, or email her at: sc@acns.ns.ca to book an appointment

Bank of Montreal Bid for Life Dinner & Auction



Thank you to everyone who helped with and attended the Bank of Montreal Bid for Life Dinner & Auction 2017. Thank you to our title sponsor, the Bank of Montreal for supporting our cause for more than 15 years. Thank you to our other sponsors: Frischkorn Audiovisual, WestJet, Chester + Company and The Atlantica Hotel. The event raised over \$28,000 that will help people living & affected by HIV/AIDS access programs and services dedicated to their health and well-being. See you next year!

Contribute to Positive Dispatch



If there is anything you want to see in this newsletter, we would love to hear from you! If you know of any events coming up or have any information you would like to share, please contact Lori at (902)425-4882/1-800-566-2437 ext. 225, or email her at: sc@acns.ns.ca.

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What's Going On...?

May

May 17, Halifax
International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia (IDAHaT)

- For a variety of reasons there will be no formally organized public IDAHaT event in Halifax this year

May 22
ACNS is closed for the holiday

June

June 6-9, Regina, SK
Canadian AIDS Society PLWHIV Forum

- For more info go to <http://www.cdnaids.ca/2017-plwhiv-forum-details/>

June 8, 5 - 7 pm, Halifax
Poz Gay Guys Group

- For info contact Lori at (902)425-4882/1-800-566-2437 ext. 225, or email her at sc@acns.ns.ca.

July

July 13, 5 - 7 pm, Halifax
Poz Gay Guys Group

- For info contact Lori at (902)425-4882/1-800-566-2437 ext. 225, or email her at sc@acns.ns.ca

July 20-30, Halifax

- Halifax Pride Festival (look for ACNS in the parade, and at our booth after the parade)
- For info <http://halifaxpride.com/>

August

August 19, 5 - 7 pm, Halifax
Poz Gay Guys Group

- For info contact Lori at (902)425-4882/1-800-566-2437 ext. 225, or email her at sc@acns.ns.ca.