

MESSAGE FROM THE Co-Chairs

IN 1998, 30 people gathered in Quebec City to discuss the novel concept of rehabilitation for those living with HIV, in Canada and beyond. This was a monumental first. This group of pioneers comprised people living with HIV, representatives from AIDS service organizations, government officials and program and policy makers, teachers, researchers, rehabilitation specialists and other health care providers. No one knew for certain how to connect rehabilitation with HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, but everyone was keen to play their part.

Thus, some 15 years ago, the Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation (CWGHR) was born. Since that time, we have tirelessly pursued our mission: to be a leader and a catalyst for improved rehabilitation services for those living with HIV. We do this via integrated research, education, policy and practice – and through the strength and caring of our dedicated people.

In 15 years, we've learned a lot and enjoyed many successes. Our work with both employers and employees on episodic disabilities, including HIV, has translated into a greater sensitivity for these important issues and better working conditions for everyone.

We've set the agenda for research priorities related to HIV and rehabilitation, identified episodic disabilities as a critical lens for dealing with chronic illness, and been instrumental in promoting interprofessional education and practice.

We continue to create better access for all to rehabilitation services, and are proud to see the innovative programs now being developed and the growing network of providers who support them.

As we reflect back, we remember those who have made invaluable contributions to CWGHR.

Moving into our next 15 years, we are building on our past accomplishments and reaching ever forward, always with

our members and our mandate at the fore. Fifteen years hence, we expect to be reporting back to you on many more shared successes that will continue to improve the lives of those living with HIV and other episodic disabilities.

David Salter and Glyn Townson
Co-Chairs, Board of Directors

VIGNETTES FROM Our 15th Year

ACCESS TO REHABILITATION

Equitable access to a wide variety of rehabilitation services is essential for people living with HIV and related illnesses. Increasing this access is at the core of everything we do. Rehabilitation allows people to be part of the workforce, grow older with dignity, and maintain holistic well-being, and also fosters the social inclusion of people with episodic illnesses. This year, we raised the profile of CWGHR's longstanding work on access to rehabilitation. We created a new section of our website dedicated to this topic, and penned a series of evidence-based fact sheets and backgrounders – which are now readily available to the many stakeholders working with us to bolster the case for integrating accessible rehabilitation services into the continuum of care for people living with HIV and related illnesses.

"It takes good quality services and empowered providers to make true rehabilitation a reality."

— Gregory Daly, Access to Rehabilitation Advisory Committee

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is a key component of overall health and mental health services are an important rehabilitation tool for those living with HIV and related illnesses. This year we reinvigorated Positive Outlook, a workshop that builds capacity among front-line service providers to support clients who are living with episodic disabilities and experiencing depression. Working with CWGHR, social worker Mary Petty engaged 45 participants in four cities, aided by René Thibodeau in Quebec City, and provided an introduction to evidence-based intervention strategies from a cross-disability perspective. We are supporting people living with HIV and related illnesses by educating service providers on the links between HIV and much-needed mental health services.

"Good mental health is critical to living successfully with an episodic disability. CWGHR is helping to make people aware of this important connection."

— Mary Petty, Social Worker

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND INCOME SUPPORT

Being part of the labour force can present both opportunities and challenges for people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities.

In February 2014, CWGHR launched The Business Case for Actively Recruiting and Retaining People with Episodic Disabilities, research that examined the many reasons why Canadian employers should hire people living with episodic disabilities. The project addressed the employment challenges affecting people living with episodic disabilities and highlighted the potential benefits to Canadian businesses in

"Most people with HIV and other episodic disabilities are eager and able to continue working. We educate employers so that they don't overlook great workers."

— Stephen Tattle, CWGHR Executive Director

making such hires. Strides have certainly been made towards a paradigm shift on hiring people living with disabilities, but much more still needs to be done.

This year, CWGHR has also continued to contribute to the work of the Episodic Disabilities Network and the Ontario Episodic Disabilities Network as a member and as the Secretariat for both. We are committed to increasing awareness among employers about the employment-related issues of people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities.

HIV AND AGING

Aging with HIV is the new reality for many Canadians and people living with HIV around the world. CWGHR is strengthening relationships with the aging sector across Canada, raising awareness of the needs, assets and experiences of older adults living with and vulnerable to HIV. This year, we contributed to gerontological and long-term care conferences. We shared our evidence-based and community-informed perspective on the impact of aging on marginalized communities – including people living with and vulnerable to HIV – to help shape vital research agendas. We found allies at the Canadian Home Care Association who have helped us engage the aging sector in adapting a ground-breaking, intersectoral service provider training on older adults and HIV. This training was originally developed by the AIDS Community Research Initiative of America, a global leader in HIV and aging, who have supported CWGHR in the adaptation of the curriculum for the Canadian context. CWGHR is working towards optimal and equitable care, treatment and support for people aging with HIV.

"I've lived with HIV for 30 years. I've been a survivor, a witness, and a pioneer, thanks to many services and supports."

— Ron Rosenes, Research Working Group Chair

15 HONOUREES FOR OUR 15th Anniversary

Over the past 15 years, we have worked with many talented and committed volunteers and contributors. We thank all those who have supported our mission. We also recognize the following 15 honourees for their commitment to CWGHR and to improving the lives of people living with HIV:

Gerry Bally
Ron Bowie
Deb Cameron
Louis-Marie Gagnon
Ken King
Don Phaneuf
Chris Sulway
Sheila Thomas

Gillian Bone
Jeremy Buchner
Will Chegwidien
Bob Gardner
Tom McAulay
Peggy Proctor
Stephen Tattle

We extend our congratulations to the 2013 recipients of our Award of Excellence, Dr. Patty Solomon and the *Coalition des organismes communautaires québécois de lutte contre le sida* (COCQ-SIDA).

Reach Forward With CWGHR

As we look to the future, we see you in ours!

Please help CWGHR to help others – and spread the word. **Be a CWGHR advocate and tell someone about our work.** Send us a note about how involvement with CWGHR has touched your life. **Be a friend of CWGHR and consider becoming a monthly donor.** We cannot continue to help others without your generous support.

Reflecting Back, Reaching Forward

ANNUAL REPORT 2013/2014

1998

CWGHR founding meeting held in Quebec City

1999

1st national HIV and women conference held



2000

CWGHR publishes 1st position paper on HIV and Rehabilitation

2001

CWGHR receives inaugural funding for HIV as a disability

2002

CWGHR incorporated and registered as a charity



2003

Canadian HIV/AIDS Skills Building symposium includes a rehabilitation stream for the 1st time

2004

Federal AIDS funding doubles to \$84 million over five years

2005

Canadian stakeholders launch the collaborative call to action, "Leading together: Canada Takes Action on HIV/AIDS"

2006

CWGHR hosts 1st summit on Episodic Disabilities



2007

CWGHR and partners lead workshops in Cameroon on HIV, Disability and Rehabilitation

2008

1st Managing Episodic Disabilities course launched

2009

Canadian/International HIV and Disability Policy Dialogue held



2010

CWGHR co-hosts satellite session at International AIDS Conference

2011

CWGHR hosts roundtable on Access to Rehabilitation

2012

International policy dialogue on HIV and Mental Health held

2013

CWGHR's 15th Anniversary

