

Canadians Commend their US Counterparts for marking National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day

Toronto, September 18th, 2014 – Today marks the seventh observance of [National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day in the United States](#). The theme of this year's event is "Aging is a part of life: HIV doesn't have to be." Older adults living with HIV in Canada share many of the same challenges as their American counterparts. In solidarity, the National Coordinating Committee on HIV and Aging (NCC) in Canada would like to express our shared commitment to improving access to HIV prevention, care, treatment and support for older adults.

It is estimated that over 30% of people living with HIV in Canada are now age 50 or older. Ron Rosenes, an HIV advocate recently appointed to the Order of Canada, and a long-standing member of the NCC is one of those Canadians. "Today we acknowledge our colleagues in the United States, especially those at the [AIDS Community Research Initiative of America](#) and [The AIDS Institute](#). These non-profit organizations have been champions, identifying and raising awareness of the issues facing people like me who are aging with HIV. Their advocacy efforts have resulted in the creation of clinical guidelines for older adults with HIV", Ron shared.

The introduction of combination antiretroviral therapies in the mid-1990s drastically improved the life expectancy of people living with HIV. The number of new HIV diagnoses among people age 50 years and older has increased from one out of every ten individuals a decade ago, to almost one out of every five today.

Aging well with HIV is dependent on many factors. These include timely access to HIV diagnosis and treatment; patient-centred healthcare that aims to maximize function and prevent concurrent illnesses; social inclusion and support; and adequate financial resources and living conditions. Members of the NCC address these issues individually and collaboratively through research, education, programming and policy-change efforts.

According to Ron, "The NCC hopes to have a similar positive impact here in Canada where older adults living with HIV, are facing many unexpected challenges. These include an increased burden of illness occurring at a younger age and a lack of appropriate services."

Currently, there is no annual HIV and Aging Awareness Day in Canada. In 2013, members of the NCC worked in partnership with the [Canadian AIDS Society](#) to produce an HIV and aging-themed World AIDS Day campaign entitled "[It's Not Over.](#)"

The **National Coordinating Committee on HIV and Aging** comprises older people living with HIV as well as representatives from community-based and national organizations, clinicians and researchers from both the HIV and aging sectors. The mandate of the NCC is to foster and strengthen connections between stakeholders who are working to address issues affecting older adults living with or vulnerable to HIV in Canada through information exchange, collaborative initiatives and awareness-raising.

The [Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation](#) (CWGHR) is a national charitable organization, working to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV through rehabilitation research, education, and cross-sector partnerships. CWGHR acts as the secretariat for the NCC. For more information, visit www.hivandrehab.ca

National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day was first introduced by [The AIDS Institute](#) in 2008 and is held each year on September 18th. The campaign is supported by the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#), Office of HIV/AIDS Policy and www.aids.gov.

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