

## LIFE INSURANCE & PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW & WHAT YOU CAN DO

Historically people living with HIV were not eligible for life insurance in Canada. In fact, being HIV positive was an immediate disqualifier for insurance products. In 2016, Manulife became the first Canadian company to accept life insurance applications from people living with HIV followed by Sun Life. Canada Protection Plan has since started offering limited life insurance options to some people living with HIV. Despite the well-publicized fact that HIV is now considered as a complex chronic condition for people living with HIV who have access to anti-retroviral therapy and who adhere to their treatment regimen (as with any other complex chronic condition that requires life-long medication), there are only two insurance carriers in Canada (at the time of publication of this 'Brief') that offer life insurance to people living with HIV.

## WHY LIFE INSURANCE MATTERS TO PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

Advances in medications have meant that people living with HIV who are on treatment have life expectancies that are close to that of their HIV negative counter-parts. Just like everyone else, people living with HIV also want to be able to ensure that their loved ones do not face financial hardship as a result of their death. In a recent survey conducted by **Realize** people living with HIV indicated to us that they wanted to protect their loved ones through their death benefits, especially in the following areas:



### MORTGAGE PAYMENTS



### CHILDREN'S EDUCATION



### UNPAID DEBTS



### DEPENDENT'S EXPENSES

### What is the Current General Criteria for Eligibility to Life Insurance for People Living with HIV in Canada:

Though policies may differ from company to company, in general to date, the current criteria for favorable insurance assessments for people living with HIV are as follows:

- 5 years' stability on antiretroviral therapy;
- An undetectable viral load; and
- Treatment by an "expert" in HIV medicine who the person sees regularly and to whom the person on treatment remains open to care suggestions.

**5 ACTIONS THAT COULD BE TAKEN TO INCREASE ACCESS TO LIFE INSURANCE BY PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV**

- **HAVING A 'ONE-STOP SHOP' FOR INFO RELATED TO HIV AND INSURANCE**
- **PEER NAVIGATION THROUGH THE PROCESS**
- **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TO COLLECTIVELY REVIEW THE RANGE OF INSURANCE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THEM**
- **CONTINUED DIALOGUE/ENGAGEMENT/ADVOCACY WITH THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY**
- **CONDUCT TRAINING ON 'THE BASICS OF HIV' TO REDUCE STIGMA STILL FACED BY PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV FROM SOME INSURANCE SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS**

**realize** FOSTERING  
POSITIVE CHANGE  
FOR PEOPLE LIVING  
WITH HIV AND OTHER  
EPISODIC DISABILITIES

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**“Working with the insurance companies as part of a range of services – financial and otherwise – will be important to people living with HIV moving forward.”**

- Person Living with HIV who attended *Realize's* 2018 'HIV & Insurance' Think Tank -