

# ABOUT...

## HIV/AIDS

### KEY FACTS IN CANADA

The increasing social cost of HIV/AIDS in Canada is evident in the most recent national data available from Health Canada (May 2004). Based on current research findings, we know that:

- **More Canadians are living with the disease.** At the close of 2002, an estimated 57,000 Canadians have tested positive for HIV.
- **New infections are not declining.** After a brief decline in the year 2000, there was a 17% increase over the next two years in the number of positive HIV tests reported.
- HIV/AIDS is transmitted primarily through **sexual behaviour**. The proportion of reported HIV diagnoses among **men who have sex with men** (MSM) has increased steadily since 1996, reaching 40% in 2002. In the same manner, the proportion of reported HIV cases attributed to **heterosexual** exposure continues to increase, peaking near 25% in 2002.
- People with HIV/AIDS are **living longer** due to better and more accessible treatments. Although this is good news, HIV/AIDS continues to grow in Canada, and places significant burdens on the health and social services systems.
- An encouraging decline continues in the number of new infections among **injection drug users** (IDU).
- The number of **women** living with HIV remains at approximately 23% of new infections. Of the infections acquired in 2002, 53% were due to heterosexual contact, and the rest due to intravenous drug use.
- **Aboriginal people** accounted for approximately 250 to 450 of the new HIV infections in Canada in 2002.
- Although youth (aged 10 to 24 years) currently constitute a small proportion of the total number of reported HIV and AIDS cases in Canada, they are a group that has been greatly affected by the epidemic globally. An estimated 11.8 million youth are living with HIV/AIDS, and half of all new infections worldwide are occurring among young people.
- An estimated 17,000 Canadians are **unaware they are infected**.

## KEY FACTS IN THE WORLD

- Twenty-six years after the first clinical evidence of acquired immune deficiency syndrome, AIDS has become the most devastating disease humankind has ever faced.
- Globally, the number of people living with HIV continues to grow - from 35 million in 2001 to 38 million in 2003. In 2003, almost five million people became newly infected with HIV, the greatest number in any one year since the beginning of the epidemic.
- Almost three million were killed by AIDS in 2003; over 20 million have died since the first cases of AIDS were identified in 1981.
- An estimated 12 million children lost one or both parents to AIDS by the end of 2003.
- Only 7% of the people who need antiretroviral treatment in developing countries have access to ARVs – 400 000 at the end of 2003.

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### Sources

*Basic Facts: Canadian Strategy on HIV/AIDS.* Health Canada, 2001

*Current Realities: Strengthening the Response: Canada's Report on HIV/AIDS.* Health Canada, 2001.

*HIV/AIDS Epi Updates.* Health Canada, May 2004

*UNAIDS 2004 Report on the Global AIDS epidemic,* Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 2004.

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