

# Network news

Issue 17

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

September 2004

## Joanne Csete to take helm: Network appoints new Executive Director

---

Action and Activism at  
AIDS 2004 2

---

Drug Users and  
Prisoners Have  
Rights Too! 2

---

Thai Drug Users'  
Network Receives  
2004 International  
Award for Action 3

---

Treatment, Microbicide  
and Vaccine Activists  
Launch Joint Call  
for Action 3

---

Fighting for the right to  
privacy 4

---

Inside the Network 4

---

New Resources 4

---

The Legal Network is very pleased to welcome Joanne Csete as its new Executive Director, beginning 1 November 2004.

Many Network members know Joanne for the brilliance, passion and dedication she has brought as a member of the Network's Board of Directors over the past two years. Joanne's close collaboration with the Board and with current Executive Director Ralf Jürgens will help provide for a smooth transition as she moves into her new role at the Network. To facilitate this transition, Ralf has agreed to remain in his post until the end of October.

"I look forward to the privilege – and the adventure – of working with the Legal Network's excellent staff and Board, and with the membership," says Joanne. "It is my fondest hope that although we lose Ralf's outstanding leadership, the Legal Network will maintain the courage and integrity that he helped make a hallmark of its work. I am humbled by the big shoes to fill!"

Joanne will leave her post as Director of the HIV/AIDS and Human Rights Program at Human Rights Watch (HRW), where she has supervised research and advocacy on a wide range of human rights violations related to the AIDS epidemic. Joanne's program at HRW has been instrumental in defending and promoting the human rights of women and girls, drug users, and children in countries around the world. Joanne was previously Chief of Policy and Programs at the UNICEF Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa in Nairobi, where she worked on AIDS programs and policies. Prior to that, she lived and worked in Africa for over ten years, focusing mainly on public health and nutrition programs in Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Joanne has an undergraduate degree in economics from Princeton, a Master's degree in Public Health from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. in Public Health Nutrition from Cornell University.

Please join us in welcoming Joanne to her new position at the Network. "This is a dream come true," says Ralf Jürgens. "The Network, our members, and the fight against HIV/AIDS and for human rights will benefit from the leadership, energy and expertise Joanne will provide as the Network's new Executive Director."



## ACTION AND ACTIVISM AT AIDS 2004



As part of our commitment to promoting human rights-based responses to HIV/AIDS in Canada and around the world, the Legal Network took an active role at the XV International AIDS Conference held in July in Bangkok, Thailand. Giving voice to human rights issues was all the more important given the relative lack of formal sessions on legal, ethical, and human rights concerns at the conference. The Network's activities at the conference included 10 poster presentations, as well as two oral presentations by Glenn Betteridge and Ralf Jürgens on prison-based needle exchange programs and on the Network's work to assist the introduction of harm reduction measures in prisons in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Our information booth in the NGO exhibition area of the conference provided an opportunity for delegates from around the world to consult Network publications and learn more about our work.



Demonstrators question the conference slogan "Access for All", at the start of AIDS 2004

Summaries of all the most relevant presentations on law, ethics, and human rights delivered at the conference will be published in early 2005 in a special edition of the *Canadian HIV/AIDS Policy & Law Review*. Copies of Network presentations are already available online at: [www.aidslaw.ca/bangkok2004/participation.htm](http://www.aidslaw.ca/bangkok2004/participation.htm)

### Drug Users and Prisoners Have Rights Too!

Over 110 participants from around the world attended the satellite conference on *Human Rights at the Margins: HIV/AIDS, Prisoners, Drug Users and the Law* we held just prior to the start of AIDS 2004.

In a compelling opening address, Paisan Suwannawong, founding member of the Thai Drug Users' Network, profiled abuses arising from Thailand's infamous "war on drugs" as well as the struggles and successes of drug user organizing in that country. A range of panelists from both developing and developed countries further explored the critical human rights issues facing drug users and prisoners in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, making recommendations on priority areas for action. Participants also provided input on two draft background papers on prisoners, injection drug use, and human rights. Workshop sessions offered an additional forum for skills-building and the identification of advocacy strategies and opportunities for collaboration.

Feedback on the meeting was positive, with one participant noting that "only a few programs, institutions or NGOs target HIV/AIDS issues through a legal and human rights perspective. Thank you!"

Revised versions of the background papers presented at the satellite and the proceedings of the conference will be published this fall. The draft versions are currently available at: [www.aidslaw.ca/bangkok2004/e-bangkok2004.htm](http://www.aidslaw.ca/bangkok2004/e-bangkok2004.htm)

The Bangkok satellite conference was organized by the Legal Network in collaboration with the Lawyers Collective HIV/AIDS Unit (India), International Harm Reduction Development, and the Thai Drug Users Network, and was co-hosted by UNAIDS. Funding for was provided by UNAIDS; the International Harm Reduction Development Program; Health Canada's International Affairs Directorate; and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

(Continued on page 3)

© 2004 Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. *Network News* aims to keep readers up to date on activities undertaken by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. We encourage the dissemination of the information contained in this newsletter and will grant permission to reprint material provided that proper credit is given.

**Editor:** Elana Wright  
**Lay-out:** Mélanie Paul-Hus  
**Graphics:** Marc Fraser, Peter Dimakos

**Translator:** Josée Dussault  
**Contributors:** Thomas Haig  
Ralf Jürgens, Richard Elliott

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network  
417 Saint-Pierre St., Suite 408, Montréal, QC H2Y 2M4  
Tel: 514 397-6828  
[www.aidslaw.ca](http://www.aidslaw.ca)

Fax: 514 397-8570  
[info@aidslaw.ca](mailto:info@aidslaw.ca)

ISSN 1488-0997



Funded by Health Canada, under the Canadian Strategy on HIV/AIDS. The findings, interpretations, and views expressed in this publication are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official policy or positions of Health Canada or the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network.

The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network is a charitable organization promoting the human rights of people living with and vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, in Canada and internationally. We accomplish this through research, policy analysis, education, advocacy and community mobilization.

## AIDS 2004 (Continued from page 2)

### Thai Drug Users' Network Receives 2004 International Award for Action

The Legal Network and Human Rights Watch presented the 2004 International Award for Action on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights to the **Thai Drug Users' Network (TDN)** at a press conference held during the Bangkok AIDS conference. TDN has protected the human rights of drug users in Thailand despite a brutal anti-drug crackdown that resulted in as many as 3000 killings. Founded in 2002, it has worked with few resources to help drug users throughout the country protect themselves from HIV and other blood-borne diseases, and has organized peaceful protests that have brought state abuses against drug users to national and global attention.

The Awards are presented annually to one Canadian and one International Recipient. TDN representatives Paisan Suwannawong and Karyn Kaplan will attend the Awards ceremony to be held in Montreal at the start of the Network's AGM on 10 September 2004 (the Canadian award recipient will also be announced at that time).

The Network recently wrote a letter to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pierre Pettigrew, and the Minister for International Cooperation, Aileen Carroll, expressing our ongoing concern for the safety of TDN members and Thai drug users in general, and asking what the Canadian government will do to ensure their human rights are respected.

For more information about TDN and the Awards, visit: [www.aidslaw.ca/Maincontent/awards.htm#2004](http://www.aidslaw.ca/Maincontent/awards.htm#2004)



### Treatment, Microbicide and Vaccine Activists Launch Joint Call for Action

With the rapid growth of distinct activist movements for HIV/AIDS treatments, microbicides, and vaccines in recent years, the need to avoid the trap of advocating for prevention at the expense of treatment, or treatment at the expense of prevention, has become increasingly important.

To this end, representatives from each movement made common cause at the Bangkok conference with the launch of a joint *Statement of Commitment* and 12-point *Plan of Action*. Aimed at coordinating advocacy efforts in areas of common interest, the *Statement* and *Plan* call for concerted action by governments, industry and civil society organizations to ramp up health care services in low- and middle-income countries, boost public and private research into both treatment and prevention products, and ensure widespread access these products.

As part of the launch, over 30 journalists attended a press conference organized by the Legal Network, featuring Richard Elliott, the Network's Director of Legal Research & Policy, and speakers from the AIDS Law Project of South Africa, the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), the Global Campaign for Microbicides, and UNAIDS. The following day, we held a cross-training workshop in partnership with ICASO for activists and advocates from the three movements.

The launch of this joint call for action is the outcome of a project spearheaded by the Network over the past two years. A campaign is now underway to secure additional endorsements of the *Statement of Commitment* by civil society organizations from around the world. For more information, visit: [www.aidslaw.ca/Maincontent/issues/vaccines.htm#mtv](http://www.aidslaw.ca/Maincontent/issues/vaccines.htm#mtv)

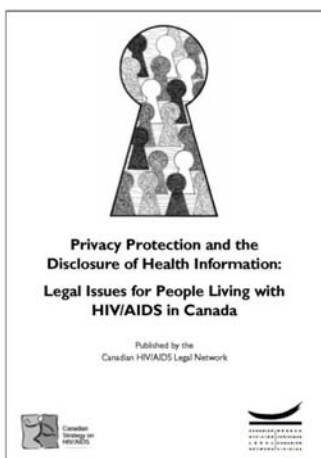
Joint Advocacy  
on HIV/AIDS  
Treatments,  
Microbicides,  
and Vaccines

#### Statement of Commitment



Support this call for an  
effective, comprehensive  
global response to  
HIV/AIDS

To add your organization's  
endorsement, please contact:  
Elana Wright  
(514) 397-6828 ext 259  
[ewright@aidslaw.ca](mailto:ewright@aidslaw.ca)



Print copies can be obtained from the Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Centre,  
(613) 725-3434 or 1-877-999-7740  
(toll free within Canada)  
email: [aidssida@cpha.ca](mailto:aidssida@cpha.ca);  
web: [www.aidssida.cpha.ca](http://www.aidssida.cpha.ca)

## Fighting for the right to privacy

People living with HIV/AIDS often suffer discrimination as a result of the unauthorized disclosure of their HIV status. Respect for privacy is crucial to ensuring early detection of illnesses and appropriate medical treatment. To raise awareness of the legal and ethical issues related to privacy in the context of HIV/AIDS, the Network has launched a comprehensive report and a series of seven info sheets entitled *Privacy Protection and the Disclosure of Health Information: Legal Issues for People Living with HIV/AIDS in Canada*.

The report focuses on three important areas of concern: (1) the lack of adequate and effective protection in Canadian law for the right of peo-

ple living with HIV/AIDS to keep their personal health information private; (2) clauses in legislation that permit disclosure of health information without a person's consent; and (3) the inadequacy of legislative remedies for breaches of confidentiality.

The report and info sheets will be sent to a broad range of individuals and organizations working in areas related to privacy protection and the confidentiality of health information, as well as to government policy makers, community organizations, health-care professionals, privacy commissioners and ombudsmen, researchers, and advocates.



## Inside the Network

### Jacqueline Gahagan joins Board

The Legal Network is pleased to welcome Jacqueline Gahagan to the Board of Directors. Jacqueline began teaching at Dalhousie University in the fall of 1999 at the School of Health & Human Performance. She is also cross-appointed to Community Health & Epidemiology, Nursing, International Development Studies, and Women's Studies. Her research topics include sexual and reproductive health; HIV and hepatitis C prevention, care, treatment and support; harm reduction; injec-

tion drug use; and public health policy issues such as access to health care resources among socially marginalized populations. Previously, she worked on health promotion programming and evaluation related to HIV and hepatitis C prevention and tobacco use prevention.

Jacqueline is also a Commissioner with the Nova Scotia Advisory Commission on AIDS and a member of the Ministerial Council on HIV/AIDS.



## New Resources

Privacy Protection and the Disclosure of Health Information: Legal Issues for People Living with HIV/AIDS in Canada - report and series of info sheets (via [www.aidslaw.ca/Maincontent/issues/privacy.htm](http://www.aidslaw.ca/Maincontent/issues/privacy.htm))

Programming HIV/AIDS: A human rights approach - A tool for development and community-based organizations responding to HIV/AIDS [2004] (via [www.aidslaw.ca/Maincontent/issues/discrimination/rights\\_approach/international.htm](http://www.aidslaw.ca/Maincontent/issues/discrimination/rights_approach/international.htm))

The Network's Annual Report 2003-2004, the 2004/2005 workplan and the new strategic plan (via [www.aidslaw.ca/about.htm](http://www.aidslaw.ca/about.htm)).

2004 Awards for Action on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights brochure ([www.aidslaw.ca/Maincontent/awards.htm](http://www.aidslaw.ca/Maincontent/awards.htm))