

For immediate release

COURT RULING SHIELDS VANCOUVER'S SUPERVISED INJECTION SITE

Ottawa should commit to supporting health facilities such as Insite

TORONTO, May 27, 2008 —The federal government should finally commit itself to supporting supervised injection facilities as one important component of preventing the spread of HIV and hepatitis C associated with unsafe injection drug use, said the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network in response to today's court ruling in Vancouver.

"Today the B.C. Supreme Court recognized that criminal law cannot be used to deny people the benefits of a health facility such as Insite, Vancouver's supervised injection facility, and that to do so would violate the constitutional rights of some of those who are most vulnerable and in need of such health services," said Richard Elliott, Executive Director of the Legal Network.

The Legal Network called upon the federal Health Minister and the Prime Minister to commit firmly to ensuring that such health facilities can be implemented elsewhere in Vancouver and by other cities that have identified the need. "It's time to end the waffling and misdirection that we've seen so far," said Elliott. "The evidence is extensive and shows the benefits of such health facilities, including reducing injecting behaviour that risks transmitting HIV and hepatitis C. Ideology cannot be allowed to block the delivery of health services and perpetuate a public health crisis."

About the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network (www.aidslaw.ca) promotes the human rights of people living with and vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, in Canada and internationally, through research, legal and policy analysis, education, and community mobilization. The Legal Network is Canada's leading advocacy organization working on the legal and human rights issues raised by HIV/AIDS.

– 30 –

For more information, please contact:

Richard Elliott

Executive Director
Telephone: +1 416 595-1666 ext. 229
E-mail: relliott@aidslaw.ca
Website: www.aidslaw.ca