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IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD IN VOTE ON BILL C-393

Statement from Richard Elliott, Executive Director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

December 2, 2009, Ottawa — “Today’s vote in favour of sending Bill C-393 to Committee is an important step towards providing medicines to children and adults dying of treatable diseases in developing countries. Parliament now joins experts and advocates in the fields of science, academia, public service and the arts, newspaper editorial boards, and according to a recent poll, 80 percent of Canadians, in support of reforming Canada’s Access to Medicines Regime [CAMR].

“The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network appreciates Members of Parliament rising in support of this legislation at Second Reading following debate that was characterized by hyperbolic misinformation from its opponents. We congratulate and thank them. The Legal Network looks forward to a reasoned debate at Committee, and the opportunity to further make the case that simplifying the licensing process of CAMR — to allow developing countries to access medicines more quickly and easily from Canadian generic drug makers — will save lives.

“We continue to maintain that this legislation is a win for patients in the developing world who need medicines, a win for Canadian generic companies that can supply those medicines, a win for brand-name drug companies that would receive royalties, and a win for Canada’s international reputation — all at no cost to Canadian taxpayers.

“Parliament made an important decision today but there is more work to do. We look forward to building upon the support of the MPs who voted to reform CAMR, and expanding this support to other MPs to ensure Canada successfully finishes what it started in 2004, when Parliament unanimously voted to bring in the regime.”

For details on CAMR reforms, please visit www.aidslaw.ca/camr.

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