



Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network | Réseau juridique canadien VIH/sida

L E G A L N E T W O R K N E W S

Issue 37 | May 2010

### Only one month to go

Preparations continue for the Legal Network's Annual General Meeting and 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Symposium on HIV, Law and Human Rights, taking place in Toronto on June 11 and 12, 2010. In addition to our keynote speaker, **Dr. Michel Kazatchkine, Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**, symposium topics will include: the criminalization of HIV exposure; women's rights issues that need to be addressed in Canada; and challenging restrictions in Canada's immigration policy affecting people with HIV. The closing session on housing as an important human rights issue in HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, organized jointly with the Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation, will feature **Michael Shapcott, Director of Community Engagement at the Wellesley Institute**, who is recognized as one of Canada's leading housing policy experts and a long-time housing and homelessness advocate. Have you registered yet? See [www.aidslaw.ca/symposium](http://www.aidslaw.ca/symposium).

### Record-level membership

Thank you to more than 200 Legal Network members who have supported our work by taking out or renewing their membership! This brings our membership to levels not seen since the early 2000s. Your gesture underlines the increasing importance of placing law and human rights at the forefront of the fight against HIV and AIDS. Please consider joining or renewing at [www.aidslaw.ca/joinus](http://www.aidslaw.ca/joinus).

### "Now More Than Ever"

To date, over 650 HIV/AIDS organizations worldwide, including the Legal Network, have endorsed *Human Rights and HIV/AIDS: Now More Than Ever* in an attempt to place human rights at the centre of the global AIDS response. The joint declaration presents ten reasons why protecting human rights is essential to public health, particularly for a disease such as HIV that affects the most marginalized in society. The *Now More Than Ever* campaign has grown since it was drafted for the 2006 International AIDS Conference and will again figure prominently on July 20, 2010, during the International AIDS Conference in Vienna in July, when activists gather for an exciting program of activities in the Human Rights Networking Zone in the AIDS 2010 Global Village., co-hosted by the Legal Network and the Open Society Institute, with support from the Levi Strauss Foundation and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa. Human rights will also be highlighted prominently during the conference by an historic march, rally and concert for human rights. To endorse the declaration and find out more about human rights activities at AIDS 2010, visit [www.hivhumanrightsnow.org](http://www.hivhumanrightsnow.org).

### CAMR campaign heats up Industry Committee

May 14 marks the sixth anniversary of royal assent given to the bill that created Canada's Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR) in 2004. The campaign to fix CAMR is intensifying as community activists both in Canada and abroad react to the lack of action by our representatives in Ottawa. Bill C-393, which proposes to streamline CAMR and make it truly workable, was referred to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology last December. While the Committee has yet to hold public hearings and get on with study of the Bill, it has certainly heard from the community. The Industry Committee Clerk reports that her office has received approximately 2,000 postcards, an unprecedented number.

We need to continue telling our elected representatives that mothers and children, among others, are dying to get life-saving drugs. Contact your MP. Let us know what response you've received. If you'd like to send postcards and also get your friends, family and others to do the same, please contact our Outreach Coordinator, **Lindsey Amèrica-Simms**, at [lsimms@aidslaw.ca](mailto:lsimms@aidslaw.ca). The Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign has been active, as have students from Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM) who joined with the Legal Network to host a teach-in event in Montréal in mid-April. Since then, the AQOCI, Quebec's network for international cooperation, has decided to join the campaign. The labour movement, both in Canada and Africa, has also been campaigning relentlessly for the broader objective of access to medicines. Join us, too!

More information can be found at [www.aidslaw.ca/camr](http://www.aidslaw.ca/camr), including this key overview, "Fixing Canada's Access to Medicines Regime: 20 Questions & Answers", and the text of a postcard you can print off and mail to your MP. You can also watch the short video on why CAMR needs to be fixed and join the Facebook group on reforming CAMR.

### **Raising criminalization awareness with judges...**

The Legal Network and HALCO, the HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic (Ontario), worked with the National Judicial Institute to develop and present in late March a half-day, bilingual training session on HIV and criminalization, the first such session ever delivered for judges in Canada. Dozens of judges from across the country heard a range of presenters from medical experts, social scientists, PHAs and service-providers. Judges were also provided with Legal Network material including resources found at [www.aidslaw.ca/criminallaw](http://www.aidslaw.ca/criminallaw).

### **...and within the francophone immigrant community**

In late April, policy analyst **Cécile Kazatchkine** made a presentation on the criminalization of non-disclosure of HIV at an Afro-Caribbean dinner organized by le Centre francophone de Toronto through its AIDS prevention program. It was an excellent opportunity to address this issue among the immigrant francophone population of Canada's largest city which was eager to become better informed about the law regarding criminalization.

### **Your opinion is needed**

AIDSLEX launched just over six months ago — and we would like your feedback on the site. Please visit [www.AIDSLEX.org](http://www.AIDSLEX.org) to complete a short survey. It should only require about ten minutes of your time, and your responses will benefit us as we continue to develop this essential online resource. Deadline to complete the survey is 28 May.

### **On the move**

Policy analyst Cécile was recently in Casablanca, Morocco, attending the 5<sup>th</sup> francophone conference on HIV/AIDS where she presented the Legal Network's efforts to produce a legislative resource to support women's rights (available in its entirety at [www.aidslaw.ca/womensrights](http://www.aidslaw.ca/womensrights)). On May 11, she will be in Longueuil, Quebec to give a presentation on injection drug users' right to health during the annual meeting of *l'Association des intervenant(e)s en toxicomanie du Québec*.

Following the Legal Network's February consultation on women's rights, deputy director **Patricia Allard** held meetings in Ottawa with parliamentarians and policy-makers to further strengthen the strategy in development. In April, she gave a presentation at the Fredericton conference of CANAC, the Canadian Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, on the significance of the B.C. court decisions on Insite, Vancouver's supervised injection site.

In early April, senior policy analyst **Sandra Ka Hon Chu** presented the Legal Network's brief on prison needle and syringe programs before the House of Commons Public Safety Committee. The timing was perfect since there had been a recent wave of media interest following the launch of our new publication *Under the Skin* (available at [www.aidslaw.ca/undertheskin](http://www.aidslaw.ca/undertheskin)).

Sandra then joined executive director **Richard Elliott** for the International Harm Reduction

Association's 21<sup>st</sup> International Conference held in Liverpool, U.K. during the last week of April. Sandra presented *Under the Skin* while Richard delivered a panel presentation entitled "Treatment or torture? Applying international human rights standards to compulsory drug dependence treatment."

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**About the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network**

The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network ([www.aidslaw.ca](http://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.

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