



HALCO

HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario

Statement

For immediate release

REVERTING TO AN OUTDATED SEXUAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM VIOLATES CHARTER RIGHTS OF ONTARIANS

***Increased stigma and discrimination will be the norm if Ontario government is
allowed to move forward with using the old curriculum***

The following statement is issued by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network ("Legal Network") and the HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario ("HALCO"). Comments can be attributed to Richard Elliott, Executive Director, Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, and Ryan Peck, Executive Director, HALCO.

January 8, 2019 — The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and the HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario have been granted intervener status in the challenge to the Government of Ontario's decision to revert to an outdated sexual education curriculum. The challenge, brought forward by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and an Ontario teacher, will be heard this week, on January 9 and 10.

Under the outdated curriculum, students will not be taught up-to-date information related to HIV, sexual orientation, gender identity, same-sex relationships or issues of consent, all of which were featured in the new curriculum. But an effective response to HIV and other sexual health issues requires frank, non-judgmental information about LGBTQ sex and sexuality, and HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and must also address homophobia and transphobia.

The decision to revert to an outdated curriculum is an attack on the Charter rights of people with HIV and people at risk of HIV. The clients and communities we serve, including students living with HIV and students who have family members living with HIV, already face extensive stigma related to their HIV status. Misinformation, and a lack of information, drive such stigma and create greater vulnerability to acquiring and transmitting HIV.

This government has already shown its willingness to dismiss and ignore the Charter rights of Ontarians. Any government that threatens to dismiss and override human rights is a danger to all — and in this case, a danger to Ontario's young people. They need and deserve better.

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Contact:

Joshua Terry, Communications and Campaigns Officer
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
Telephone: +1 416 595-1666 ext. 236
Email: jterry@aidslaw.ca