

# AIDS New Brunswick Annual Report Fiscal Year 2004-2005



## Message from the President

In 2005, we celebrate 20 years since a group of concerned New Brunswickers first sat around a kitchen table to develop what is now known as AIDS New Brunswick. Since 1985, AIDS New Brunswick has worked with individuals and communities throughout New Brunswick to create supportive environments for persons living with HIV/AIDS and to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. We celebrate many successes that are highlighted throughout this annual report.

However, we also have faced our share of challenges. In mid year we were forced to take a significant funding cut from the provincial government for our HIV/AIDS Helpline services. As of April 1, 2005, we receive \$0 in funding from the provincial government. While the Federal government has committed to doubling the Canadian Strategy on HIV/AIDS, the Federal government does not fund direct services such as counselling, peer support and gatherings for people living with HIV/AIDS; these services are a provincial responsibility. The funding cut has meant less staff time available for direct services, such as telephone counselling and information. And yet our client base continues to increase. Every month one more New Brunswicker gets infected with HIV or diagnosed with AIDS and our helpline is busier than ever. We must continue to make our voices heard.

Despite this adversity, we have excelled with existing programs and have taken on several new initiatives such as a *Gathering for Women living with HIV*, a summer gathering for clients, peer support Phone Chats, and our youth developed desk calendar *Twelve Months to Becoming a Sexpert...*and so much more. We also partnered for the first time with the Public Health Agency of Canada, Hepatitis C Prevention, Support and Research Program on a very successful project and developed excellent new resources that are now available through our Resource Library and Speakers Bureau. We also played a key leadership role in advocating for comprehensive sexual health curriculum in middle schools. I extend my congratulations to the Department of Education for their leadership in this area.

We continue to play a leadership role in volunteerism in New Brunswick. With financial support from Volunteer Canada and the Canada Volunteerism Initiative, we developed a *New Brunswick Volunteers!* bilingual web site and virtual volunteer fair with voluntary organizations throughout New Brunswick.

I extend my sincere congratulations to our over 100 volunteers, Board and staff for their continued commitment and achievements. Special recognition must go to the staff and Board for maintaining a balanced budget and a strong organization in the face of adversity.

As I round out the end of my term as President, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Board Members, Staff and Clients for their never ending support during my term with the organization.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margaret Dykeman".

## Board of Directors 2004-2005

### President:

Margaret Dykeman

### Vice-President:

Jim Burns

### Treasurer:

Roberta Ellingsen

### Secretary:

Maria Richard

### Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Representative:

James Edwards

### Directors:

Joanne Brideau-  
Hachey

Sandra Byers

Margaret Colwell

Myles Legacy

Anne Moore

Jocelyn Paul

Tracey Rickards



## A community movement

Formed in 1987, AIDS New Brunswick is a non-profit, community-based agency directed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

### Our Mission

AIDS New Brunswick is a provincial organization committed to facilitating community-based responses to the issues of HIV/AIDS. The aim is to promote and support the health and well-being of persons living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS in New Brunswick.

### Responding to HIV/ AIDS: We Can All Take Action

All of us, regardless of the communities to which we belong, can be part of a response.

### How can we respond and make a difference? How can AIDS New Brunswick support individual, family and community responses to HIV/AIDS?

#### On an individual or personal level...

- Assess your risk of getting HIV and take positive steps to reduce any risks. Part of assessing your risk may first involve getting informed about HIV transmission.
- Reflect on your own attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS.

- Volunteer and/or support the fundraising efforts of your local AIDS organization and write letters to community leaders and policy makers in support of funding HIV/AIDS related initiatives.

### AIDS New Brunswick helps people become better informed and address HIV/AIDS-related concerns.

#### In 2004-2005, we:

- Responded to over 1,900 callers through the toll-free Helpline.
- Received an average of 572 visitors per month and 10,898 visits on our web site ([www.aidsnb.com](http://www.aidsnb.com)). Our youth component was visited 2,501 times.
- Provided support counseling to persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHIV/AIDS) and caregivers on 354 occasions.
- Supported financial assistance for 23 PLWHIV/AIDS through a partnership with AIDS Saint John and SIDA AIDS Moncton.
- Provided *Holiday Gift Program* gift certificates to 47 active clients.
- Distributed over 12,000 condoms.
- Provided 227 walk-in education consultations/counseling sessions to the general public.
- Took in over 20,000 needles and distributed close to 18,000. There were over 900 visits to the Needle Exchange Program.
- Supported the involvement of over 100 volunteers in the organization.
- Participated in 48 media features throughout New Brunswick

- In partnership with our Youth Advisory Committee, piloted a series of prevention focused radio ads in Woodstock, Bathurst and Fredericton in recognition of National Condom Week.

#### **Among your families, friends and co-workers you can...**

- Raise awareness about HIV prevention by talking about how HIV is transmitted and prevented, and by encouraging those you know to change activities that put them at risk of contracting HIV.
- Raise awareness and challenge prejudice directed at those living with HIV or AIDS.
- Offer support to family and friends affected by HIV/AIDS.

#### **AIDS New Brunswick helps to inform and support networks.**

##### **In 2004-2005, we:**

- Provided 35 sessions to schools/universities, non-profit organizations and government departments through our Speakers Bureau; 2,308 people participated including 1,290 youth.
- Delivered a regional Hepatitis C workshop. Over 80 service providers and young people participated.
- Responded to requests for nearly 14,000 print materials from our provincial Resource Centre/Library.
- Developed three new bilingual Hepatitis C resources: *Get the Facts! Living with Hepatitis C*, *Get the Facts! Know your Risks and Get Tested* (fact sheets) and an interactive learning game *Target Hepatitis C*.

- Piloted and held *Peer Support Phone Chats* for people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Held a provincial *Gathering for Women* for women living with HIV/AIDS, a Fall Forum and in partnership with SIDA AIDS Moncton, AIDS Saint John and Healing Our Nations held a spring workshop for people living with HIV/AIDS called *It's all A Balancing Act*.
- Worked with our provincial Youth Advisory Committee on a pilot project and developed a desk calendar *Twelve Months to Becoming a Sexpert...and so much more!* The calendar was piloted in University residences
- Provided student preceptorship support to a St. Thomas University Social Work placement and two NBCC Human Services placements.

##### **As a community...**

- Become involved in groups or organizations that work towards the development and improvement of public policy and services, such as sex education programs in schools, income security programs for PLWHIV/AIDS and needle exchange and methadone programs.
- Participate in community initiatives aimed at increasing HIV/AIDS awareness and generating funds for prevention and support programs.

#### **AIDS New Brunswick Staff**

##### **Executive Director:**

Haley L. Flaro

##### **Program Support Coordinator:**

George Flanders

##### **Program Coordinators:**

Denise Ogon  
Julie Keirstead

##### **Persons Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHIV/AIDS) Liaison:**

Sara Davidson

##### **Project Coordinator**

Amber Nicol

##### **Walk-in Programs Coordinator**

Kelly Morrell

## Recognizing an incredible volunteer, employee, colleague and friend...

At the end of December 2005, long time employee George Flanders will be leaving the organization. George plans to spend some time traveling over the next year. George started with the organization as a volunteer in the early 1990's and was hired as an employee in 1995. George's excellent accounting and office management skills have been a critical asset to the organization. His hard work, dedication and sense of humour will truly be missed.

## AIDS New Brunswick supports community opportunities.

### In 2004-2005, we:

- Worked with the City of Fredericton on a resolution to the provincial government in support of needle exchange programs and Methadone Maintenance Treatment programs. The resolution was passed by Fredericton City Council and by the NB Association of Municipalities.
- Worked in partnership with the UNB Faculty of Nursing, City of Fredericton Police Department, NB Department of Health and Wellness, Addiction Services and STU Department of Social Work to deliver a Needle Exchange Program.
- Worked in partnership with St Thomas University to organize the Fredericton AIDS Walk; over 500 people participated. A net amount of \$10,000 was shared between AIDS New Brunswick and the Stephen Lewis Foundation.
- Organized a Poinsettia campaign which netted over \$1,500.
- In partnership with the *Queer & Other Folks Dance Committee* and the *East Coast Bears* delivered four social events for the gay/lesbian/bisexual community and raised more than \$4,000.
- Delivered, in partnership with other AIDS organizations in New Brunswick, a *Wake up to HIV/AIDS* breakfast for MLAs and other community leaders.
- Through the PLWHIV/AIDS Spring Workshop, women's gathering and Fall Forum, provided an opportunity for over 40 PLWHIV/AIDS to come together for skills-building and peer support.
- In partnership with youth-serving agencies, continued lobby efforts for a comprehensive sexual health curriculum.
- In partnership with members of the NB Coalition on Prescription Drug Use and the CCENDU Fredericton Site Committee and with financial support from Purdue Pharma, piloted AWARE!/INFORMATION, a provincial newsletter on drug and alcohol issues in New Brunswick.
- Held a focus group with gay/bi men in New Brunswick to help inform the development of a gay men's health web site.

## Volunteer Corner

Volunteers are the cornerstone of our efforts. In 2004-2005, volunteers contributed 1,440 volunteer hours in areas such as our Speakers Bureau, translation, Board of Directors, Youth Advisory Committee, AIDS Walk, Walk-in Programs (e.g., Needle Exchange Program), dances, Health & Wellness Committee for PLWHIV/AIDS and our Resource Centre. We also carried out a *Canadian Volunteerism Initiative* special project and developed a provincial Virtual Volunteer Fair in collaboration with voluntary organizations throughout New Brunswick. Check it out at [www.nbvol.com](http://www.nbvol.com) !

## Thank you to our major financial supporters and donors in 2004-2005!

Public Health Agency of Canada, AIDS Community Action Program  
Public Health Agency of Canada, Hepatitis C Prevention, Support and Research Program  
NB Department of Health & Wellness  
Canada Volunteerism Initiative  
National Crime Prevention Strategy  
Purdue Pharma  
Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition  
Glaxo SmithKline  
Fredericton Community Foundation  
Oromocto Dental Centre  
Alcool NB Liquor  
The East Coast Bears  
Human Resources & Skills Development Canada  
NB Department of Training and Employment Development

### Did you know?

- In 2004-2005, James Edwards recorded the highest number of volunteer hours at 103 hours, followed by Jocelyn Paul (93), Margaret Dykeman (89), Myles Legacy (87), Daniel Patterson (78) and Cyrille Godin (60).
- Our Health & Wellness Committee recently launched a provincial newsletter for people living with HIV/AIDS called POZITIVE NEWS.
- You can now make a direct online donation at [www.aidsnb.com](http://www.aidsnb.com) through CanadaHelps.org! Click on “fundraising” and “donate”. You will receive an electronic tax receipt.
- Board member Jim Burns was recently elected to the Board of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network.
- Due to the popularity of our *HIV/AIDS Jeopardy* Game, we developed a second interactive learning game called *Target Hepatitis C!*
- Our *Guide to Living with HIV/AIDS in New Brunswick* was recently updated. Contact us for a copy!
- As a member, you can register to receive our e-newsletter—*Action HIVIH*—every 6 months!
- Interested in the Board of Directors? Go to [www.aidsnb.com](http://www.aidsnb.com) and click on “About Us” and “Board” and fill out a nomination form and a membership form!
- Needle Exchange Programs (NEPs) in New Brunswick (Fredericton & Saint John) get \$0 in funding. The government of Nova Scotia provides close to \$300,000 in funding for two NEPs in Nova Scotia and the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health and Community Services has committed \$50,000 annually to the NEP in St. John’s Newfoundland.

### Quotable Quote

*If my having HIV is the only way I would have met these 6 other amazing women, then so be it. I'll accept and embrace it. I have more hope for the future because of this weekend and the stories I have heard. Everyone here has touched me in a special way. Thank you for everything. - HIV+ woman; participant in the 2005 Women's Gathering*

## ***Report on 2004 PLWHIV/AIDS Forum Recommendations***

Recommendations	Action Taken
1. It is recommended that AIDS New Brunswick continue to work on improving on all recommendations adopted at past years Annual General Meetings.	We continue to enhance actions taken on recommendations from previous years. For example, the Health & Wellness Committee continues to play a key role in PLWHIV/AIDS program, service and policy development; the three PLWHIV/AIDS designated seats on the Board are currently filled; there are four PLWHIV/AIDS currently registered in our Speakers Bureau; a summer gathering, two women's gatherings and an annual Fall Forum for PLWHIV/AIDS were delivered; and persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHIV/AIDS) and caregivers received support counseling on 354 occasions. In addition, the PLWHIV/AIDS Liaison position was expanded from three days per week to four days per week starting April 1, 2005. A pilot peer support program, <i>Phone Chats</i> , were also piloted for women living with HIV/AIDS and gay men living with HIV/AIDS.
2. It is recommended that AIDS New Brunswick advocate appropriate levels of governments in respect to decreasing the time frame for new HIV/AIDS drugs to be added to the provincial formulary. Furthermore, at the present time, get the new drug Reyataz added to the formulary .	The drug Reyataz is currently available through the Plan U special authorization process. The organization plans to consult with PLWHIV/AIDS and HIV specialists to identify any issues and recommendations regarding the provincial formulary.
3. It is recommended that AIDS New Brunswick develop a survey directed to the needs of women newly diagnosed, and those living with HIV. It is further recommended that AIDS New Brunswick partner with other AIDS Service Organizations and Infectious Disease Specialists in the delivery of this survey.	A needs assessment specific to women was delivered in June 2005. Eight women living with HIV/AIDS participated. Barriers to health were reported as being financial and transportation issues, physical mobility issues, and emotional issues, such as a fear of others finding out their HIV status. Services they want from AIDS New Brunswick are more support groups, gatherings and retreats.
4. It is recommended that AIDS New Brunswick seek an opinion from the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission in regards to whether or not Persons Living with HIV/AIDS are being discriminated against if they are unable to receive disability status, and should be able to, under the current guidelines. It is further recommended that upon receiving the outcome of this opinion, if it is found that under current guidelines Persons Living with HIV/AIDS are being excluded, and the Human Rights Commission says that it is discriminatory, AIDS New Brunswick may be asked to file a complaint with the Human Rights Commission.	We continue to offer our services to assist people living with HIV/AIDS, on a case by case basis, for application and appeal to programs. In order for our organization to make an official inquiry and lobby on behalf of our clients, it is essential that our clients living with HIV/AIDS contact our Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Liaison to let the liaison know about any challenges they may experience in accessing programs/services. More consultation needs to take place with PLWHIV/AIDS with respect to this recommendation.
5. It is recommended that AIDS New Brunswick develop a series of skills building workshops for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, these workshops should be made available in the format of CD ROMs and print modules. It is further recommended that in 2005 AIDS New Brunswick hold a skills building workshop focusing on the issue of self empowerment.	We are currently exploring existing CD-ROM resources and print materials, primarily from Canadian sources, in order to secure a library of skills building modules for PLWHIV/AIDS.  A workshop on self-empowerment is scheduled for the November 2005 Fall Forum for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS.
6. It is recommended that AIDS New Brunswick develop partnerships with holistic health practitioners to provide alternative therapy to the HIV/AIDS community.	Five massage therapy students from the Atlantic College of Therapeutic Massage in Fredericton came to the Summer Gathering for PLWHIV/AIDS held at Camp Rotary August 26 – 28, 2005 in order to provide massage therapy to participants. We continue to explore the provision of similar services in the future.

## **We consulted, now we'll plan...**

In 2004-2005, we carried out the following needs assessments and evaluation: *Community Based Needs Assessment on Injection Drug Use and Related Issues in Fredericton, N.B.* (April 2005), *Needs Assessment with Clients Living with HIV/AIDS in New Brunswick* (June 2005) and *Evaluation of the AIDS NB Helpline Initiative* (June 2005). Here are some highlights:

### **Injection drug use needs assessment—Fredericton**

We interviewed 47 current and former injection drug users and surveyed 20 agencies that serve this population.

- Most people started injecting in their late teens or early twenties
- Dilaudid and cocaine are the most commonly injected drugs The most frequent places they inject at are their own house or in a public washroom
- 35% reported having shared someone else's needle after it had already been used. The most common reason for sharing was they did not have their own equipment or easy access to new equipment
- 68% had a criminal record. Of those who had been incarcerated, 30% had injected in prison
- Almost half of participants had been denied access to a drug treatment program. The main reason access was denied was because the program was full
- Over half of community agencies identified that their clients face barriers when accessing both drug treatment services in general and Methadone Maintenance Therapy (MMT). The most common barrier identified in both categories related to wait lists and limited size of program
- Almost half of participants had accessed the Fredericton Needle Exchange Program in the past. The main reason cited for not using the exchange was they did not know where it was, or that there was even one in the city
- Community agencies suggested that to reduce rates of recidivism amongst injection drug users there is a need for more flow between programs, and more follow-up and community support once the treatment program ends
- Community agencies showed a high level of support for a harm reduction approach to drug issues: three-quarters (75%) agreed with the approach compared with only 6% who did not

### **Client needs assessment**

We interviewed twenty-three of our clients.

- 70% of our clients live in an urban area; 30% live in a rural area
- Over 53% of clients said that their income was "Under \$9,999" in the last year
- 61% had to travel outside of their region to access HIV/AIDS treatment
- Clients said there is a need for improved access to HIV specialists in the province and increased training for health professionals
- The most common types of problems experienced after people found out about their HIV status were "Rumours/Gossip" and "People avoid(ed) social contact with you"
- HIV specialists, family doctors and HIV/AIDS organizations were the most frequently cited services used to maintain health and well-being
- Clients were interested in receiving skills-building around stress and anxiety management

### **Helpline evaluation**

We interviewed general callers to the Helpline, clients living with HIV/AIDS who access the program, staff and community partners.

- All (100%) clients surveyed indicated that they could ask questions and discuss concerns openly
- All (100%) clients surveyed reported that when they called the Helpline, their needs were adequately met
- Clients living with HIV/AIDS surveyed identified that the two most beneficial aspects of the Helpline were that they derived comfort and a sense of hope simply from knowing the Helpline is available to them and the provision of emotional support

For copies of any of these reports, please contact the organization at 1-800-561-4009 or [sidaids@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:sidaids@nbnet.nb.ca) .