

# CANADIAN ABORIGINAL AIDS NETWORK LE RÉSEAU CANADIEN AUTOCHTONE DU SIDA



## Campaign Backgrounder

Aboriginal people living in Canada represent 3.8% of the country's total population but represent more than three times that number in prevalent HIV infections. Aboriginal people are the most vulnerable population in Canada to test positive for HIV. Statistics from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) indicate that Aboriginal people now represent 27.3% of positive HIV test reports in 2006. This is a 4.1% increase from 2005.

In partnership with the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada, the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) has developed and distributed Valentines to First Nations, Métis and Inuit community leaders to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination.

Reducing HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination is seen as an appropriate first step towards creating an environment that is conducive to engaging Aboriginal people, communities and leadership in the real work to; (1) prevent further infections, (2) provide support for testing and diagnosis, and (3) care and treatment of Aboriginal People living with HIV/AIDS (APHA).

By launching its biggest and longest running social marketing campaign ever... CAAN hopes to increase support from and endorsement by Aboriginal leaders and officials for prevention, care and treatment programs intended for our communities.

CAAN will provide leaders with resources and promotional materials related to this campaign to help raise levels of awareness and knowledge of Aboriginal HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination.

In November 2008, leaders across the country will be asked to "sign on the line" to let their community know there are committed to reducing HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination.

Through this leadership commitments initiative, our vision is to get 5000 signatures by next year, to show we are standing together to turn the page, and end stigma.

CAAN acknowledges that Aboriginal political and health leaders (at the community, provincial, regional and national levels) are crucial to creating environments free of stigma and discrimination. Although many leaders have already stepped forward to face the real challenges associated with HIV/AIDS, a long-term commitment is required to engage, foster and expand messaging to those political and health leaders where HIV/AIDS endorsement is lacking.