



## News Release

For Immediate Release

### **Mount Royal MP Anthony Housefather announces Government of Canada support to help reduce HIV and hepatitis C at the AIDS Community Care Montreal**

May 17, 2018

Montreal, QC

Public Health Agency of Canada

Today, on behalf of the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health, Anthony Housefather, the Member of Parliament from Mount Royal, was pleased to announce an investment of \$1,050,000 over 5 years from the Government of Canada to support the work of AIDS Community Care Montreal (ACCM). The funding will be provided through the HIV and Hepatitis C Community Action Fund.

ACCMs projects aim to increase prevention and knowledge, promote risk reduction and behaviour based change, and support treatment adherence for English speaking people living with or at risk of sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBI) in Montreal. The proposed activities include SextEd, an anonymous text-based helpline for English speaking at-risk youth (including queer and trans), increased outreach to Montreal-area gay men and workshops to promote treatment adherence among men who have sex with men. SextEd has received 58,857 article visits and inquiries this year alone. Additionally, the "Aging with HIV" program for people over 50 years of age will address different aspects of aging with HIV in order to create programming that responds to individuals' needs. Through programs such as this one, ACCM is empowering their members to play active roles in the institutions that proudly service them.

STBBI are preventable and treatable. Still, these infections—including HIV, hepatitis C, chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis—remain a significant public health concern in Canada. Approximately 2,500 individuals are infected with HIV every year, joining the estimated 65,000 people who are living with HIV in Canada. Of those, one in five is unaware of their infection. Similarly, an estimated 44% of the more than 245,000 Canadians living with hepatitis C are unaware of their infection and may not be accessing treatment. As well, the number of new cases of sexually transmitted infections significantly increased between 2006 and 2015.

"I am proud to see that the government is supporting the important work being done by AIDS Community Care Montreal" said Housefather. "We have made considerable strides in reducing HIV and Hepatitis C over the past 30 years, however there is still a great deal of work to be done to reach the global goal of eliminating these infections as a public health threat by 2030. Organizations like AIDS Community Care Montreal play a crucial role in treating and eliminating these diseases and I am grateful to them for the important work that they do."

Executive Director of AIDS Community Care Jeansil Bruyere said, "(a)fter over 30 years of life saving services, it is crucial that ACCM receives ongoing and more importantly increased financial support to sustain the programming we offer to the diverse communities of Montreal. Together we can effectively challenge stigma."

Minister of Health, Ginette Petitpas Taylor added, "Through the Community Action Fund, the Government of Canada is making a significant investment to support excellence in community programming to help Canadians with, or at greatest risk of acquiring, HIV, hepatitis C and other sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections. Through projects like the one at AIDS Community





Care Montreal today, we want to prevent new infections, reduce stigma and discrimination, and increase access to testing and treatment throughout Canada.”

“Though preventable and treatable, sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections are serious infections that continue to pose a public health risk for Canadians.” Said Dr Theresa Tam, CHIEF Public Health Officer of Canada. “Raising the profile of these diseases, which disproportionately impact Canadians who suffer the greatest health inequities, is a key priority for me. The Public Health Agency of Canada will continue to support initiatives at the local level, particularly in areas where there is the greatest burden of disease.”

## Quick Facts

- The Community Action Fund is investing \$132 million over 5 years to support community-based initiatives that have the potential to make the greatest impact in slowing the spread of STBBI, including HIV and hepatitis C.
- Gay and bisexual men, Indigenous peoples, people who use or inject drugs, and people living in or recently released from correctional facilities are some of the groups most affected by HIV and other STBBI. The Community Action Fund aims to reduce new infections among these at-risk populations.
- In October 2015, United Nations Member States adopted the [UNAIDS 2016-2021 Strategy](#), which guides international activities and establishes various interim targets for 2020. These targets include the 90-90-90 global treatment targets to ensure that, by 2020, 90% of people living with HIV know their HIV status; 90% of people diagnosed with HIV receive antiretroviral therapy; and 90% of people living with HIV, and who are on treatment, achieve viral suppression.
- Based on available data in Canada from 2016, an estimated 80% of HIV-infected people have been diagnosed, 76% of those diagnosed are on treatment, and 89% of those on treatment have suppressed viral loads.
- Canada has also endorsed the World Health Organization’s global sector strategies for viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections and their respective elimination targets by 2030.

## Associated Links

[HIV and Hepatitis C Community Action Fund](#)  
[HIV and AIDS](#)  
[Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada](#)

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