



# News Release Communiqué

For immediate release

*Également disponible en français*

## **GROUPS RALLY ON PARLIAMENT HILL FOR ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING MEDICINES**

**Ottawa, 29 September 2010** — A coalition of community organizations and concerned Canadians from across the country are rallying today on Parliament Hill, demanding lawmakers act to follow through on past promises to help developing countries access more affordable medicines. Grandmothers groups, students, AIDS groups, development organizations and other community leaders are calling on Members of Parliament to pass Bill C-393, which would streamline Canada's Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR).

"Canada's Access to Medicines Regime must be fixed so that it can be used in future to export lower-cost, generic drugs to countries dealing with the AIDS pandemic and other public health problems," says Richard Elliott, Executive Director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. "Unnecessary red tape has been suffocating this law since it was passed in 2004. In the meantime, people are dying every day because they can't afford high-priced, brand-name drugs." He noted there is a particular need for paediatric versions of AIDS drugs: half of all children with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa die before the age of two, and 80 percent die before reaching the age of five.

The President of Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM), Rachel Kiddell-Monroe, calls CAMR reform "absolutely essential to ensuring that Canada does not renege on its promise to the developing world." Kiddell-Monroe was closely involved in the first — and only — successful attempt to use CAMR to obtain lower-cost, generic medicines for a developing country.

A streamlined CAMR has the support of dozens of academic and civil society organizations, many prominent Canadian public figures, and 80 percent of polled Canadians. "Canadians are speaking out and demanding we fulfill our commitments to the developing world," says Chris Dendys, Executive Director of grassroots citizens' advocacy group RESULTS Canada. A national poll was conducted by opinion research firm Pollara for the Legal Network, Canadian

Crossroads International and UNICEF Canada. Complete poll results can be viewed at [www.aidslaw.ca/camr](http://www.aidslaw.ca/camr).

"We call on the government and all MPs to take action on this public health and human rights tragedy by making this law workable," declares Peggy Edwards, of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign. "Time is running out for patients in need of medicines, and time is running out for getting these reforms made to CAMR. The Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology needs to take up this matter now and review Bill C-393, and Parliament must recognize that Canadians overwhelmingly want to reform CAMR and start saving lives."

For more information about CAMR and proposed reforms, see [www.aidslaw.ca/camr](http://www.aidslaw.ca/camr).

Contact:  
Christopher Holcroft  
Empower Consulting, for the Legal Network  
Telephone: +1 416 996-0767  
E-mail: [chris\\_holcroft@yahoo.com](mailto:chris_holcroft@yahoo.com)

Gilleen Witkowski  
Communications Assistant  
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network  
Telephone: +1 416 595-1666 ext. 240  
E-mail: [gwitkowski@aidslaw.ca](mailto:gwitkowski@aidslaw.ca)