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### **AIDS REVIEW SHOULD ENDORSE MORE MONEY FOR MOST VULNERABLE, SAY NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**TORONTO / OTTAWA, November 28, 2006** — Ottawa's recently announced review of federally funded HIV/AIDS programs should recognize the urgent need for increased funding to essential programs that reach the most marginalized people affected by the disease, said Canada's national HIV/AIDS organizations today.

"Community-based AIDS organizations across the country have worked wonders with the limited resources at their disposal," said Kevin Barlow, Executive Director of the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network. "But they don't have enough funding to provide Canadians with the essential prevention, care, treatment and support they need."

As early as 2003, the all-party House of Commons Standing Committee on Health recommended that federal funding for HIV/AIDS be increased to \$100 million per year by 2008. The national HIV/AIDS organizations are calling on Health Minister Tony Clement to address this recommendation in the upcoming review. Otherwise, under current projections, the funding in 2008 will fall \$16.6 million short of that goal.

"Ottawa should be stepping up its fight against AIDS by investing in stable, long-term funding that is both fiscally and socially responsible," said Joanne Csete, Executive Director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. "That means improving funding for AIDS programs that accept the reality of people living with and affected by AIDS and that respect their human rights. It also means providing enough funding to ensure that Canada pays its fair share in the global AIDS response."

The most successful and cost-effective HIV/AIDS programs are those based on scientific evidence and human rights principles — this was the conclusion of *Leading Together: Canada Takes Action on HIV/AIDS*, an action plan published last year in consultation with all levels of government, civil society organizations, and representatives of affected communities. *Leading Together* reviewed the

evidence of years of programming and underlined the essential role of front-line and community-based NGOs in responding effectively to HIV/AIDS. The upcoming review must take this evidence into account, say the national HIV/AIDS organizations.

“After 25 years, we know that effective HIV/AIDS programs for women, Aboriginal people, men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, and people from countries where HIV is endemic require the meaningful involvement of individuals and organizations from those communities,” said Louise Binder, Chairperson of the Canadian Treatment Action Council. “In order to be comprehensive, the government’s review of federal HIV/AIDS programs must include these people and recognize that programs for them are underfunded.”

### **National Partners**

- Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network
- Canadian AIDS Society
- Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange
- Canadian HIV/AIDS Information Centre
- Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
- Canadian Treatment Action Council
- Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation
- Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development

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