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## NEWS RELEASE/COMMUNIQUÉ



**YOUR VOICE HAS POWER  
TOGETHER, OUR VOICES WILL BE PART OF THE SOLUTION!**

### **CANADIAN ABORIGINAL AIDS NETWORK Announces Theme of Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week**

**OTTAWA, November 5, 2007** – The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network announced today the theme of Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week (AAAW) by launching its 2007 AAW website: [www.caan.ca/aaaw](http://www.caan.ca/aaaw)

“We need your voice and especially our Leaders to speak loud and clear about HIV/AIDS,” says Kevin Barlow, Executive Director of the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network. “Together, we can turn this epidemic around and together, we can make a difference for those now living with HIV or AIDS”.

Beginning on World AIDS Day (December 1st) and extending to December 5th the Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week reminds individuals, communities and leaders that because HIV/AIDS does not discriminate it affects everyone.

To increase knowledge of HIV/AIDS among Aboriginal people this year CAAN would like to encourage individuals and communities to speak up because:

**Your voice has power...**

**To create hope and healing  
To protect yourself and others  
To reduce HIV infections  
To stop stigma and discrimination**

**Get informed and speak to those around you.**

Now is an ideal time to engage your community about HIV/AIDS and how to reduce the HIV related stigma and discrimination too often associated with this virus.

All of the AAW materials including posters, booklets, fact sheets on HIV/AIDS and Aboriginal People, Protecting Yourself from Infection and Getting Tested for HIV, as well as Public Service Announcements (PSA) developed for radio and TV are on the AAW website which is linked to the CAAN website at [www.caan.ca](http://www.caan.ca).

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## Backgrounder

**Your Voice has Power.  
Together, our voices will be part of the solution!**



### 2007 AAW Background

HIV/AIDS is a complex health issue, one that presents unique challenges to Aboriginal people and the communities in which we live – to admit the relevance of HIV/AIDS personally or in the context of Aboriginal communities is also challenging. HIV is often accompanied by other equally challenging, underlying and contributing health and social factors.

The issue of HIV/AIDS, in the context of Aboriginal realities will require ongoing reinforcement of essential prevention, diagnosis, care and support messaging.

### What is the Vision of this year's campaign?

The goal of the 2007 AAW campaign is to reinforce the relevance of and need for increased knowledge, awareness and engagement around HIV/AIDS and its related issues.

Common (mis)perceptions of HIV/AIDS reinforce indifference and consequently create environments that are less conducive to prevention, diagnosis and care. Some examples of these beliefs may include “It is not in my community”, “It does not affect me”, “We have other pressing, life-threatening issues”.

To address these barriers and (mis)perceptions, it is imperative that Aboriginal leadership take action. Teachers and parents are also important in initiating meaningful prevention dialogue with and among Aboriginal youth. Youth themselves are critical to finding solutions and approaches that support long term prevention education and the relevance of early diagnosis.

This year CAAN has targeted messaging focused on Aboriginal People living with HIV and AIDS, Aboriginal Youth, Aboriginal Women, Aboriginal Community Leadership, and Testing.

**Campaign Concept:** This poster concept is an illustrative style. It includes four characters: an elder/community leader, young woman, youth and man which are key target groups also highlighted in the booklet.

Presenting these characters together on the poster represent all members of the community together and united. The details from their faces have been omitted, leaving only their mouths to reinforce the slogan: **Your voice has power.**

**“I call upon Aboriginal people and their Leaders  
to direct the elimination of HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination.”**

– Kevin Barlow, Executive Director of the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network

**Get informed. Speak to others. Be a part of the Solution!**