



## **CANADIAN ABORIGINAL AIDS NETWORK**

***Aboriginal Persons Living with HIV and AIDS (APHA) Caucus & Aboriginal People  
Living with HIV and AIDS (APHA) Leadership Standing Committee***

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**(Ratified: September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013)**

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**The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) is the home fire where the work of Aboriginal HIV, sexually transmitted blood borne infections (STBBIs), and Hepatitis C, sexual health, Tuberculosis (TB), mental health, aging and co-morbidities must start.**

Fire is an important part of most Indigenous nations. Fire is life; it connects and sustains us. Although Aboriginal peoples are diverse, the home fire represents the central place of gathering where we can work together for the wellness of all. The home fire must be nurtured and taken care of. Respect is a continuum where everyone is listened to, everyone is involved, and everyone knows what's going on. Our home fire is about our vision for the future, where we strive for healthy communities in respect of our self-determination, our diversity, and embracing our different Indigenous ways of knowing and doing.

### **Honoring Our Diversity: In the Circle... We are All Equal**

As a caucus of Aboriginal persons living with HIV and AIDS and/or co-infected with Hepatitis C, we envision a world where we are interconnected and joined together as one circle and as one community with one voice. In recognition of our diversity within our caucus, it is important to acknowledge the symbols and/or sacred items that sustain and strengthen us and remind us of our distinct identities as First Nations, Inuit and Métis within the circle of life. Each description below has been chosen for its applicability to our caucus vision of strength and unity.

**For First Nations**, *sweet-grass is one of four sacred medicines and is also seen as the hair of Mother Earth. When sweet-grass is braided together, it not only signifies unity and strength but is also a tangible metaphor for a unified world. A single blade of grass represents an aspect of the living world, when separated it can be broken, but when braided it cannot be broken. In ceremony, human hair is usually braided to signify that we are all one people and that our world vision is one of strong, united supportive communities.*

**For Métis**, *the Infinity symbol depicted on the Métis flag carries two meanings, it represents the joining of two cultures and also states that the culture shall live forever – to infinity – and that the practice and values of the Métis shall endure.* [www.learnmichif.com/culture/overview](http://www.learnmichif.com/culture/overview)<sup>1</sup>

**For Inuit**, *the Inushuk has evolved into more than just stone markers. It has become a symbol of leadership, cooperation and the human spirit – each stone is a separate entity, but was chosen for how well it fits together with other stones. The stones are secured through balance. Each one supports the one above it and is also supported by the one below it. Together the stones achieve strength through unity. This effect is applied to a philosophy for people where a group can achieve greater success with cooperation and team effort, rather than individually.* [www.freespiritgallery.ca/inukshuk.htm](http://www.freespiritgallery.ca/inukshuk.htm)<sup>2</sup>

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## CAAN VISION STATEMENT

A Canada where First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, families and communities achieve and maintain strong, healthy and fulfilling lives and significantly reduce HIV and AIDS, HCV, STBBIs, TB, Mental Health and related co-morbidity issues where Aboriginal cultures, traditions, values and Indigenous knowledge are vibrant, alive, respected, valued and integrated into day-to-day life.

## CAAN Mission Statement

CAAN provides a National forum for Aboriginal Peoples to holistically address HIV and AIDS, HCV, STBBIs, TB, Mental Health and related co-morbidity issues; promotes a Social Determinants of Health framework through advocacy; and provides accurate and up to date resources on these issues in a culturally relevant manner for Aboriginal Peoples wherever they reside.

### A Broadened Mandate through an HIV lens



## Our Leadership Forum

The *Aboriginal Persons Living with HIV & AIDS (APHA) Leadership Standing Committee* (formerly known as the APHA Advisory Committee) and the *'Members at Large'* are APHAs who are selected for leadership roles established through the authority of the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN). Embracing the 'Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV and AIDS' (GIPA) principle, the *Aboriginal Persons Living with HIV and AIDS (APHA) Caucus* is the entire mechanism that has been established by the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network in order to create a cohesive forum that embraces *'meaningful*

*engagement of people living with HIV and AIDS'* (MEPA) at all levels, for all its members. This is grounded in the belief that as a community we all have a right to dignity and security; and the belief that what we bring forward as a unified body is about **'nothing about us, without us'**. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing\\_About\\_Us\\_Without\\_Us](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing_About_Us_Without_Us)<sup>3</sup>

The roles of the *APHA Leadership Standing Committee*, the *APHA Caucus* and the *'Members at Large'* utilizes a wholistic community approach that embraces the broadening mandate of the organization, and whenever possible this established forum will cross-pollinate intersecting issues with other diseases within this wholistic model.

Based on a consensus based decision-making process, the *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* are tasked with organizing our forums, providing strategic policy advice on emerging HIV & AIDS issues, creating a synergy with STBBIs and HCV and other related co-morbidities like Mental Health and Aging. This formalized body is integral to advising on key Aboriginal issues related to the implementation of programs and services as they emerge or are identified.

## Objective

To ensure continuity and continual representation of the CAAN APHA Caucus views, issues and recommendations within the Board of Directors of CAAN.

## Caucus Membership

Any Aboriginal (First Nation, Métis, Inuit) Person Living with HIV and AIDS with a current and approved CAAN membership will be considered a member in good standing of the CAAN APHA Caucus. As representatives of the Caucus, members can be selected to function as a leadership standing committee member, or as a CAAN board of director.

## Confidentiality

Until such time that a CAAN Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) is formalized within the organization, the identities of CAAN APHA members shall be kept in the strictest confidence by the board, the staff, the membership and APHA membership.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing\\_About\\_Us\\_Without\\_Us](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing_About_Us_Without_Us)

## **‘At Large’ Representation on CAAN Board**

Two (2) APHA representatives elected from the CAAN APHA Caucus shall occupy staggered positions on the Board of Directors of CAAN and shall *Act in Good Faith*.<sup>4</sup> [legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/good+faith](http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/good+faith)

## **Purpose and Role of the APHA Leadership Standing Committee**

The purpose of the *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* is to provide advice, suggestions, direction and comments to the CEO of CAAN on the development of the APHA Coordination Programs, proposals that are being considered for funding submission, talking circles, capacity-building for APHAs, Link-Up Discussion Forum, Position Paper development, and the discussion/recommendation of resolutions to be brought forward. The *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* will also be required to ensure that a synergy happens whenever possible, particularly in the development of over-arching documents that embrace the broadened mandate of the organization’s goals of addressing HCV, STBBIs, Tuberculosis, Mental Health and other related co-morbidities within a wholistic framework.

## **Purpose and Role of the CAAN APHA Caucus**

The *APHA Caucus* meets annually prior to the CAAN Skills Building Symposium and AGM in order to draft resolutions to be presented to the floor of the CAAN AGM and to provide caucus members with the opportunity to meet, discuss issues, strategize, network and to share skills and information. The *APHA Caucus* will also be required to create a synergy within the broadened mandate of the organization.

## **Accountability**

APHA *‘Members at Large’* Board members function within the By-laws of the CAAN Board of Directors and are accountable to the members of the CAAN APHA Caucus.

The *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* members function as a standing committee of leaders from within the *APHA Caucus* and are accountable to both the *CAAN Board of Directors* and the *CAAN APHA Caucus*.

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<sup>4</sup> *Honesty; a sincere intention to deal fairly with others.*

## CAAN Committees and/or Working Groups

The Board of Directors of CAAN may establish, from time to time, permanent or temporary committees and/or working groups to assist the Board in its responsibilities and the administration of the Corporation. The Board of Directors will determine the mandate of these committees and/or working groups. The Board shall also appoint, at its discretion, a Chairperson for each committee and/or working group.

The *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* is therefore established through the Constitution of CAAN and under the authority of the Board of Directors who may appoint committees, whose members will hold their office at the will of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall determine the duties of such committees and may fix any remuneration to be paid for expenses incurred.

This formalized leadership body will carry on its business as a 'Standing Committee' of the Board of Directors of CAAN and be supported by the CAAN APHA Liaisons, until such time as it is determined that it has served its purpose, has become redundant, or no longer serves the purpose for which it was established, or has evolved to such a degree that it can operate on its own. In this case, the CAAN Board of Directors and the *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* will take the necessary steps to disengage it from CAAN, and assist its members to acquire its own resources, and carry on its work independent of CAAN.

The *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* shall not infringe upon the duties of the Board of Directors of CAAN or other Committees or working groups.

## Reporting

Upon approval, minutes of quarterly *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* meetings will be made available to the *APHA Caucus* at CAAN Annual General Meetings and made available online to the general public on the CAAN website. The CAAN APHA Liaisons will be tasked with providing administrative support.

## Membership

Membership recruitment and selection will respect the 'Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV and AIDS' (GIPA) principle and will demographically reflect cultural diversity, gender, and regional balance. The *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* shall be made up of not more than ten (10) representatives with experience and familiarity with

issues and problems confronting APHAs. The following list of skills, attributes, abilities, knowledge and experience will be considered during membership selection:

- Knowledge of problems and issues confronting Aboriginal people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Ability to represent the diversity and collective wisdom of Aboriginal people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Commitment to the role of *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* member for the duration of their term.
- Knowledge of the goals of the Aboriginal Strategies on HIV/AIDS, government policy and structure.
- Ability to actively promote the work of CAAN and the broader Aboriginal HIV/AIDS movement.
- A working knowledge of intersections with STBBIs, HCV, Tuberculosis, Mental Health and other related co-morbidities, within the broader scope and mandate of the organization.

## **Recruitment**

Until such time as there is an APHA Leadership Strategy that stipulates a specific recruitment strategy, recruitment and composition of the *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* may be determined from within the standing committee under the advisement of the CAAN APHA Liaisons and the CAAN Board of Directors.

## **Nominations and Elections of APHA ‘Members at Large’**

Nominations for the vacant position of the CAAN APHA Board Representative will be moved and seconded on the floor of the annual CAAN APHA Caucus;

Nominated APHAs will announce their intention to accept or decline their nomination; those who agree will have a reasonable amount of time to give a personal presentation;

Two (2) scrutineers shall be appointed by the APHA Caucus from CAAN staff;

Voting shall occur by secret ballot;

The nominated APHA who secures the most votes shall occupy the position of CAAN APHA Board Member for a term of two (2) years;

In the event of a tie, a re-casting of votes shall occur from the floor for the nominees who received an equal number of votes;

An alternate shall also be appointed by the floor in the event the elected APHA Board member is unable to complete her/his term.

## **Conflict Resolution**

Conflict is a natural outcome of existence and in recognition of that, the *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* and the *APHA Caucus* shall assist with the development of a culturally appropriate dispute resolution mechanism, including but not limited to the use of Elders, Talking Circles and other Aboriginal traditional ceremonial practices.

## **APHA Leadership Standing Committee Resources**

The *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* may be resourced with administrative and appropriate technical resources in the persons of either or both APHA Liaisons, to assist them in accomplishing designated work.

The *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* members may make expenditures provided prior approval of their projected budget has been obtained by resolution from CAAN and provided fiscal and human resources have been identified and secured.

## **Term of Appointment and Duration**

Unless specified otherwise, the term of appointment of *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* members, including the Chair, shall be one (2) years running from odd year to odd year (2011-2013, 2013-2015, etc).

However when it is in the best interests of CAAN, a member may be reappointed.

## **Chair**

The CAAN Board of Directors may appoint a Chair at its discretion. In the absence of such an appointment, members will assume the responsibilities of chairing the quarterly meetings of the *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* on a rotating basis as deemed necessary.

The Chairperson, with the administrative support of the CAAN APHA Liaisons shall conduct all meetings, call all meetings and serve as liaison between the *APHA Leadership Standing Committee*, the *CAAN APHA Caucus*, and the CAAN Board of Directors.

The duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson shall include:



- The Chairperson has no inherent authority, the position derives its authority and mandate from resolutions passed by the Board of Directors of CAAN;
- The Chairperson is accountable first to the Board of Directors of CAAN and second to the *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* and the *APHA Caucus*;
- The Chairperson will utilize and direct the standing committee in accordance with the mandate set by the Board of Directors of CAAN;
- The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the standing committee;
- The Chairperson shall be responsible for regular reports to the Board of Directors of CAAN with internal administrative support by either or both of the APHA Liaisons

## **Administration**

The Chair will provide reports on standing committee activities quarterly within the fiscal year at CAAN Board of Directors meetings or at such time as determined by the Board of Directors of CAAN. The Chair will ensure that agendas are set, records of meetings are kept including attendance of the standing committee are carried out in a timely professional manner. The Chair will be supported internally by either or both APHA Liaisons, to assist them in accomplishing designated work.

## **Decision Making**

All decisions of the standing committee will be through consensus of the sitting members. Sitting members are those in attendance during a given discussion. All decisions will be communicated to others via email prior to finalization, giving everyone an opportunity to comment.

## **Meetings**

The *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* will meet by teleconference or Skype 3 or 4 times a year, as deemed necessary. CAAN will make every effort to facilitate one face to face meeting annually including at the CAAN Annual General Meeting.

## **Attendance**

*APHA Leadership Standing Committee* members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings. Where extended absence from meetings occurs without regrets to three (3) meetings, the Board of Directors of CAAN will move to fill the position at its discretion using the criteria for membership selection.

## Standing Agenda

The order of business at all meetings of the *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* shall be determined by the Chair prior to the meeting, subject to change with additions by members of the Canadian National Aboriginal Working Group on HIV and AIDS (CNAWGHA) and/or CAAN. The Chair will be supported internally by either or both APHA Liaisons.

The meetings will commence with organizational business conducted in a discussion format. The general order of business will be as follows:

- Opening Prayer
- Call to order
- Regrets
- Opening remarks of the Chairperson, articulating the agenda for the meeting
- Introductions (if necessary)
- Review of previous meeting minutes
- Report of Chairperson/Members
- Business (list)
- Action Agreements
- Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting
- Adjournment
- Minutes/Record of Proceedings

Meeting records of this standing committee shall be kept, including attendance of committee members. Verbatim minutes are not required. The *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* at a subsequent meeting shall review such meeting records.

## Changes to the Terms of Reference

These terms of reference may be amended only through agreement of CAAN.

## Authority

The *APHA Leadership Standing Committee* has no authority nor role beyond that expressed in these terms of reference and is not a legal or financial entity.