



+ POSITIVE DISPATCH

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We're Open!

Our physical office re-opened August 3rd and we have resumed our regular Monday-Friday hours of 10 AM - 4 PM.

Appointments are recommended, as we still need to limit numbers in the office. Masks and physical distancing are still required. Hand sanitizer is available inside the building entrance, on each floor, and in our office. We can provide masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting wipes for visitors who need them.

A Note: Construction on Spring Garden
Spring Garden Rd. is closed to vehicles from South Park St. to Queen St. till late this fall. Bus routes have been altered during this time – the closest bus stops to the office are at *Spring Garden @ South Park* and *Spring Garden @ Queen*.

Spring Garden is still open to pedestrian traffic. The cross-streets of Brenton, Dresden and Birmingham are still open for vehicle traffic, however parking is VERY limited on these streets.



ACNS Community Consultations

Several years ago – prior to the COVID-19 pandemic – the ACNS staff and board went through a detailed strategic planning process to assess the direction of the organization in both the short and long term. We looked at the work we have been doing, the work we want to be doing, the challenges and opportunities that new developments in HIV treatment and prevention have presented, the challenges and opportunities that changes in funding programs have presented, etc.

Out of that process, some new ideas and directions emerged, which we were planning on doing PLHA client consultations and a series of 2SLGBTQIA+ consultations on in the spring of 2020. Obviously, that had to be put on hold. We're hoping to get that process back on track this winter.

If you would like to be part of that consultation process once we are ready to get it back on track, please email Chris at ED@acns.ns.ca and put "Community Consultation" in the subject line. Thanks!



Knitters & Runners Needed!

ACNS is seeking knitters - and crocheters! - to make red scarves for a new World AIDS Day campaign. The scarves need to be at least 6" by at least 60" (5ft). If needed, ACNS can even supply the yarn. For more info please contact Jennifer.

ACNS is also looking for runners, as we consider putting together a team for the Bluenose Marathon, possibly for this November, but definitely for next May. If you are interested or need more info, please get in touch with Jennifer.

we have ...

Cell Phones & Minutes

ACNS still has cell phones and prepaid minutes for our HIV+ clients who need them

AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia

If you are, or know of, an ACNS client who needs a phone or minutes text/phone 902-403-7841

ViiV Healthcare | Funding provided by: the Gov. of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund and the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia by the joint effort of the Atlantic Compassion Fund, the Gov. of Canada's New Horizons Seniors Program, Nova Scotia Power, EfficiencyOne, the Province of Nova Scotia and many generous corporate and individual donors; and by a Positive Action grant from ViiV Healthcare.

Canada

ACNS PRESENTS

BMO Bid for... CHANGE

Bid. Lounge. Win!

Your
ABSENCE
is requested.

The event isn't real...
but the **NEED** is!

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR
'No-Gala' Gala!*

NOVEMBER 6, 2021

LIVE-STREAMED @ 7 PM

- Virtual Door-Prize Draw
- Online Silent Auction Winners Announced
- Preview of Big Changes at ACNS!

* For info or updates see www.tinyURL.com/Bid4Change
or contact 902.425.4882 ext 226 or FUND@acns.ns.ca

IN SUPPORT OF

AIDS
Coalition
of Nova Scotia



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Bid For... Change?

The March 2020 *BMO Bid for Life* Dinner, Show and Auction was postponed - and then cancelled - due to COVID. An in-person fundraiser like "Bid" still isn't viable to return to yet. However, we still need to raise money to support our ongoing prevention and client support work.

So... we are re-imagining our 2021 '*BMO Bid...*' event as a "no-gala gala". That is, we'll encourage our supporters to spend the night in the comfort of their own homes and donate what they would have spent on a night out at our traditional *BMO Bid for Life* auction.

We have renamed this new event *BMO Bid for Change* (see ad on page 2) and set the 'event date' on Nov 6. Watch for more details *Coming Soon!*

For info contact Jennifer or look for updates on the event web page at www.tinyURL.com/Bid4Change.

The 'Bid' Ticket Provides:

- access to a limited number of advance online auction packages;
- a chance at winning a fabulous door prize;
- a tax receipt for the majority of the value of their ticket package purchase; and
- the link for the Nov 6 live-streamed announcement of our fabulous Door Prize draw, Silent Auction winners, and news about big CHANGES coming to ACNS.

ACNS Hamper Programs

Our first-ever Back-To-School Hamper program was a success. With funding from a grant from Viiv Healthcare, we were able to provide back-to-school necessities for three families led by PLHA parents, including help with school supplies and clothes. Recipients were very grateful for the assistance they received from ACNS.

ACNS plans to continue to offer our Christmas, Easter, and Back-To-School Hampers. These hamper programs help PLHA parents with dependent children who need assistance. If you need such assistance – or know of an ACNS client who does – please contact Dylan.

The CATS Came Back!

We are working towards re-launching our CATS program for September. Previously, The CATS program was available with a reduced schedule, with only two osteopathy appointments being available per month. In September, we will be welcoming another volunteer and will be able to offer two massage therapy appointments per month in addition to the two osteopathy appointments that we have been offering.



We are continuing to seek other practitioners to further expand the number of appointments available, and will be providing updates as needed.

For more info about the program and/or to book an appointment, contact Dylan.

Pride 50/50 Winner



James and the other \$275 going to support our programs. Thank you to everyone who bought a ticket in support of ACNS!

Congratulations to the winner of our *Woody's Rainbow of Pride 50/50* Aug 19 draw, James Baltus of Halifax! The final total was \$550, with winning \$275 going to

ACNS @ Pride

ACNS had a presence during Halifax Pride this year. We staffed a booth in the Community Market and Health & Wellness Area on both August 14th and August 15th. Festival attendees could take a break from live drag and music to stop by and get free U=U t-shirts and pamphlets, sign up for more information about the upcoming 2SLGBTQIA+ community consultation, ask questions, and say hi!

Some ACNS staff also attended the Halifax Pride March and Candlelight Vigil. Participants met on Granville Street at Province House for a rally before marching to Peace & Friendship Park, where they observed and took part in a candlelight vigil.



Volunteer Andrew Thomas looks on in envy as ACNS ED Chris Acoino chums it up with Superstar Demonstration Phallus Woody!

Client Phones

ACNS is aware that reaching staff and accessing services is hard without a phone. There is still a limited supply of prepaid cell phones available for our HIV+ clients who need a phone.

If you already have a phone that ACNS has provided to you, additional minutes can also be made available for you. We have been successful in extending the funding for this program through several grants, so if you need minutes for your ACNS provided phone get in touch ASAP.

If you need a phone or minutes – or know of an ACNS client who does – please contact Dylan.

Peer Research Partners Needed

ACNS is assisting in the recruitment of Nova Scotians to become Peer Research Partners for the APPROACH 2.0 study!

ACNS is a partner with The School of Pharmacy at Memorial U. and the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science at the U. of Alberta on their "Adaptation of Point of Care Testing for Pharmacies to Reduce risk and Optimize Access to Care in HIV, HCV and Syphilis", v2.0: also known as APPROACH 2.0.

Researchers are seeking the meaningful involvement of people with lived experience in NS to become Peer Research Partners who will guide the planning, delivery, and ongoing success of the study. To get more info about being a Peer Research Partner see <https://www.mun.ca/pharmacy/research/APPROACH-PeerResearchPartners-2021.pdf>. Apply by Sep 15.

The focus of this study is on implementing sexually transmitted and blood-borne infection (STBBI) testing programs in community pharmacies in Newfoundland & Labrador, Alberta, and Nova Scotia. Access to STBBI testing can be challenging for those who feel socially marginalized, who live in rural areas, and those reluctant or cannot access the healthcare system. The Study hopes to learn if making testing for HIV, hepatitis C (HCV) and syphilis available in pharmacies will help people get tested, know their status, and be linked with care and treatment. You can learn more about the first part of the APPROACH Study at <https://www.mun.ca/pharmacy/research/approachstudy.php>.

For more info on the APPROACH 2.0 study contact Project Coordinator Amanda Butt by email at amandab@mun.ca or by phone at 709-864-8732.

New ACNS Board

At our June AGM the ACNS board said good bye to retiring board member and Board Chair, Dave St. Laurent. Mitchell Archibald and Sheena Jamieson were re-elected for 2-year terms, and new board candidates Mike Sangster (Dartmouth), and Chris Frazer (Antigonish) were also elected for 2-year terms.

Colin Macleod and Carolyn Dawson were re-elected for a one-year term at the June AGM so that they'll be up for possible re-election in 2022 along with Marc Charrier and Nakie Davies. This was so that about 50% of the board will be up for possible re-election at each AGM moving forward.

Immediately following the AGM the new board met via Zoom to select their new executive. They are: Chair Mitchell Archibald, Vice-Chair Carolyn Dawson, Secretary Sheena Jamieson, and Treasurer Colin MacLeod.

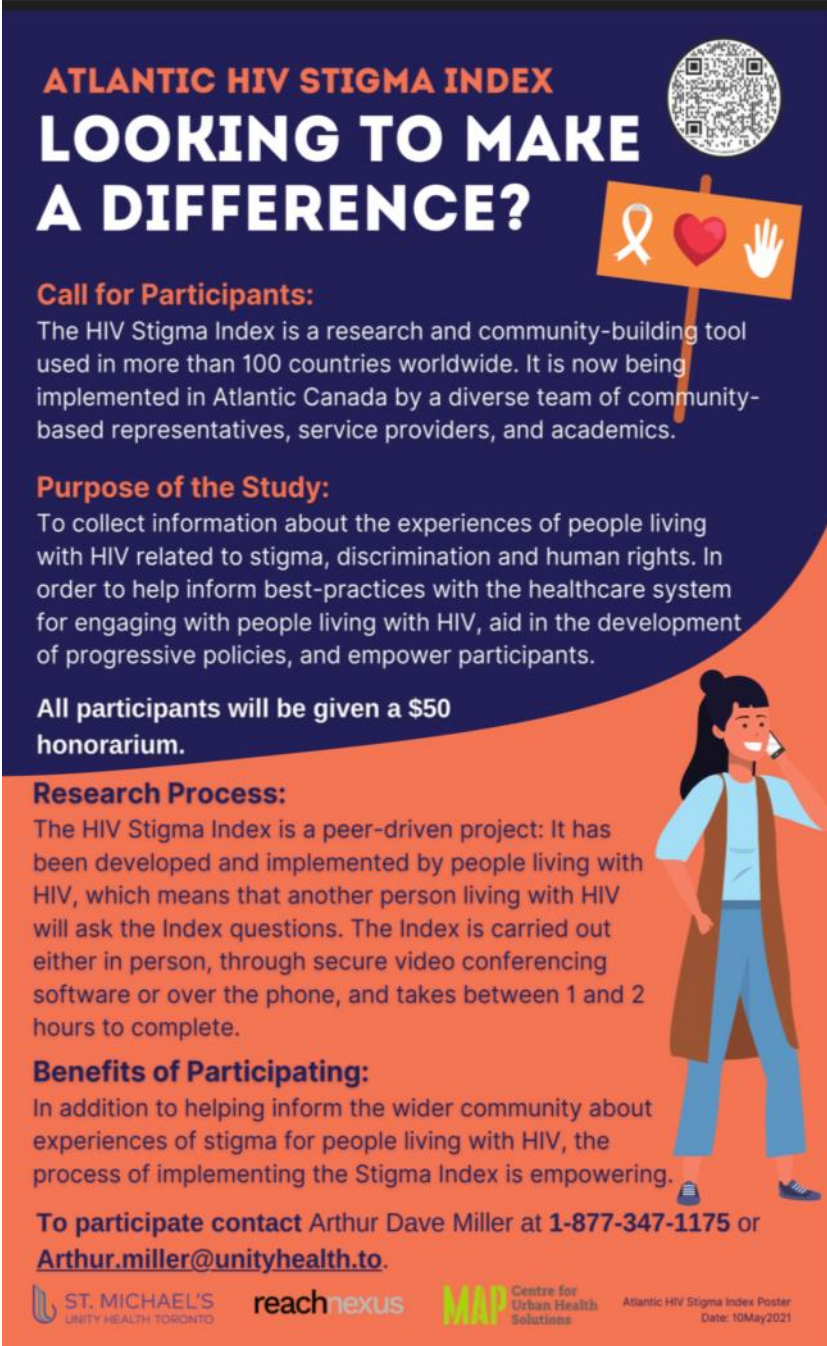
ACNS is always looking for new board members (including between AGMs). If you are interested in joining the ACSN board, or any of its committees, please get in touch with Chris at the ACNS office. Current board committees are: the Human Resources & Governance Committee, the Vision and Strategy Committee, and the Executive Committee.

Call For Participants - Stigma Index

The HIV Stigma Index is a research and community-building tool used in more than 100 countries. It is now being implemented in Atlantic Canada and the team – made up of community-based representatives, service providers, and academics – is looking for participants.

They want to collect information about the experiences of people living with HIV in regards to stigma, discrimination, and human rights. They want to use this information to inform healthcare best-practices, assist in policy development, and empower participants. All participants will be given a \$50 honorarium.

To participate, contact Arthur Dave Miller at 1-877-347-1175 or Arthur.miller@unityhealth.to.



ATLANTIC HIV STIGMA INDEX

LOOKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Call for Participants:
The HIV Stigma Index is a research and community-building tool used in more than 100 countries worldwide. It is now being implemented in Atlantic Canada by a diverse team of community-based representatives, service providers, and academics.

Purpose of the Study:
To collect information about the experiences of people living with HIV related to stigma, discrimination and human rights. In order to help inform best-practices with the healthcare system for engaging with people living with HIV, aid in the development of progressive policies, and empower participants.

All participants will be given a \$50 honorarium.

Research Process:
The HIV Stigma Index is a peer-driven project: It has been developed and implemented by people living with HIV, which means that another person living with HIV will ask the Index questions. The Index is carried out either in person, through secure video conferencing software or over the phone, and takes between 1 and 2 hours to complete.

Benefits of Participating:
In addition to helping inform the wider community about experiences of stigma for people living with HIV, the process of implementing the Stigma Index is empowering.

To participate contact Arthur Dave Miller at 1-877-347-1175 or Arthur.miller@unityhealth.to.

ST. MICHAEL'S UNITY HEALTH TORONTO reachnexus MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions Atlantic HIV Stigma Index Poster Date: 10May2021

FREE HIV SelfTests Available

ACNS is a partner in the national *I'm Ready* HIV self-testing research program! Participants will receive an HIV self-testing kit – which is proven to be fast and highly effective – and have access to a telehealth-style peer navigation service to link them to more info about prevention and care.

To participate in the program, participants will need an iOS or Android smart phone to download the *I'm*

Ready mobile app, which users can access anonymously. Through the app, participants will be asked to create a profile and answer a pre-test survey. Participants can choose to have

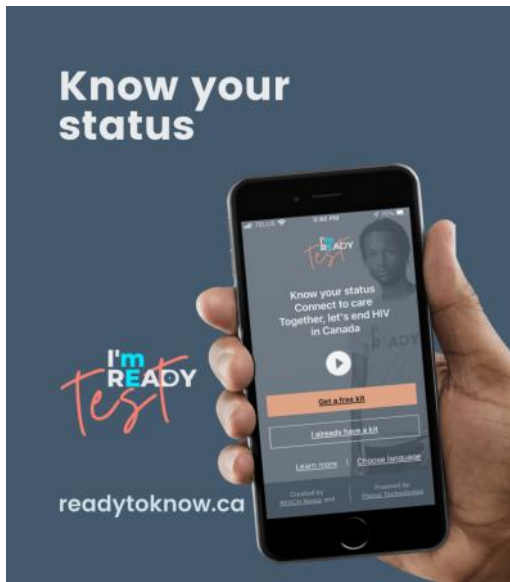
up to three self-test kits delivered to their home or another address, or opt to pick up kits at any one of 75 pickup locations across the country – ACNS being one of these distribution partners.

Once a participant has their self-test kit, they will follow the steps in the app and use the test

kit's instructions to take the self-test. After the test is completed, they will anonymously record their results in the app and receive access to more information about treating or preventing HIV.

At any time before, during or after the test, participants can also book a free, confidential appointment with a peer navigator through the program's *I'm Ready*, Talk secure telehealth service. The peer navigator will guide participants through the testing process and provide information and services for HIV care and prevention.

More information is available at <https://www.readytoknow.ca/>.



U=U Shirts Now Available!

At Halifax Pride weekend in August ACNS did a soft launch of our upcoming U=U campaign by handing out our very own ACNS U=U shirts. In August we also had an office visit from AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador staffer Shane Pope who happily rocks our U=U shirt back on 'the rock' (see photo – and so nice to meet you Shane!).

The ACNS U=U shirts are free and are currently available in sizes small to XL (we may have larger sizes available in the fall). To get yours come by the office or contact Dylan. Watch for more news about the U=U campaign this fall (see also page 7)!



Shane Pope at ACNL

Criminalization Consultation

In August, the Canadian Coalition to Reform HIV Criminalization (CCRHC) launched a community consultation regarding proposed *Criminal Code* reforms to limit HIV criminalization.

The CCRHC has previously called for changes to the federal *Criminal Code* that would limit HIV criminalization. This call was in the CCRHC's *Community Consensus Statement* released in 2017. Since then, CCRHC members have continued to press the federal government for action and have been developing some options for amendments to the *Criminal Code*. To learn more about the current state of the law and their proposed reform options, please refer to the Background Document (and other resources and info) found at <http://www.hivcriminalization.ca/community-consultation>.

To inform the next phase of their advocacy, the CCRHC has launched a cross-Canada consultation about those options with people living with HIV, people working in the HIV response, legal and human rights experts, and activists. The CCRHC wants your input.

This consultation will take place until Oct 22 via an online survey. To take the survey, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P9FWMLQ>. In addition, there will also be a number of consultations led by community-based organizations. As they are organized, CCRHC will circulate information about consultation sessions through Coalition members' networks and will post information on their website.

If you would like to organize a consultation in or with your community, contact them at ccrhc.ccrvc@gmail.com.

Training: HIV / HCV Testing

This October, CATIE is partnering with ACNS & HepNS to deliver a training course for frontline service providers in NS on HIV and Hepatitis C Testing. This course aims to develop in-depth knowledge of testing technologies, approaches to testing, and how all service providers play an important role in reaching people with HIV and hepatitis C.

This course is geared towards front-line service providers who work with people who can benefit from HIV and/or hepatitis C testing. Participants should

have a basic understanding of HIV and hepatitis C before beginning this course (for self-directed HIV and Hep C Basics courses see <http://educatie.ca/main-en.html>).



HIV and hepatitis C courses for service providers

at your own pace. Participants should expect to commit 1.5 hours per week to complete all assigned online activities. The online meeting is approximately 2 hours long.

The HIV and Hepatitis C Testing training course begins on October 4. Register now: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6341715/TST-NSC-1021>. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the Health Education Coordinators, Jordan Coulombe at jcoulombe@catie.ca or Shelley Taylor at staylor@catie.ca, to learn more.

Posi+ive Side is Back!

ACNS has copies of CATIE's *The Positive Side* magazine at the office again!

Due to COVID-19, CATIE had suspended delivery of *The Positive Side* last spring to individuals and organizations.

However, they completed the delivery of single-issue subscriptions to individuals and organizations the first week of December, while organizations who subscribed to bulk subscriptions were sent emails asking to confirm that



they wanted copies and that they were open to receive deliveries. ACNS has subscribed to a bulk subscription, so copies will be available in the office.

If you would like to subscribe to receive physical copies of the magazine, you can do so at: <https://www.catie.ca/en/positiveside/subscriptions>. You can also subscribe to the digital version of "The Positive Side" at <https://www.catie.ca/en/about/media/subscriptions>.

People living with HIV on effective treatment **can't pass it on** to a partner.

Learn more at cantpassiton.ca



Research about treatment should always be made in consultation with a medical professional knowledgeable about HIV. Protection of this information has been made possible through financial contributions from the Public Health Agency of Canada and other donors. CATIE, the Canadian Centre for HIV/AIDS, is not responsible for the content of this document. For more information about HIV treatment and prevention, visit www.catie.ca.

CATIE Ontario
1000 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 1R8

Queer Doula Kit

A toolkit centring queer birth experiences is providing safe and affirming perinatal support for 2SLGBTQ+ people in Nova Scotia and across the world. The project “aims to centre queer birth safety by contributing to queer birth education and increasing the number of



Clark Macintosh holds a Queer Doula Toolkit!

queer-identified doulas in Nova Scotia,” according to Wellness Within.

The Queer Doula Toolkit was the brainchild of Clark MacIntosh, Queer Doula Coordinator at Wellness Within Nova Scotia, an organization for Health and Justice. The non-profit

organization, founded and coordinated by activist nurse and decade-long doula, Martha Paynter, offers a queer doula training program. The illustrations were created by Julia Hutt and Audrey Chan. The toolkit is published by the Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group (NSPIRG).

Since launching the toolkit in June, the response has gone beyond anyone’s expectations, they said. People in Sweden, Australia, the U.K., and the U.S., specifically Texas, have downloaded the toolkit and used it in their communities. DONA International, the world’s leading doula certifying organization, is also using it as a resource, according to MacIntosh. It’s also being distributed to the IWK Health Centre staff, said Paynter.

The toolkit can be downloaded at <https://wellnesswithinns.org/queer-doulas>.

U=U Campaign Coming

While much-delayed by COVID impacts, ACNS is still working towards the launch of our U=U campaign which is now slated for this fall. For details on that campaign contact Chris.

Our U=U shirts are available now. To get yours come by the office or contact Dylan.

A large graphic of the letters 'U=U' in black, with a red horizontal bar above and below the text.

CATIE HIV Focus Groups

Have you recently started HIV treatment? Been on treatment long-term? Or are you HIV-negative and using HIV prevention methods? CATIE wants to know more.

CATIE, Canada’s source for HIV and hepatitis C information, is hosting online focus groups to hear about people’s experiences with their healthcare team. Your input will help them create materials for doctors and their patients. CATIE is offering a \$75 honorarium to all participants. If you are on HIV treatment or are currently using HIV prevention methods, they want to hear from you!

All information collected in the focus group application form will be held in confidence, and is only used by focus group organizers to ensure that participants reflect the diversity of communities affected by HIV in Canada. They thank everyone for their interest, but CATIE will only contact those selected to participate. For info: <https://tinyurl.com/CATIEFocusGroup>.

Admiral \$\$\$

As reported in our last issue ACNS has received a \$20,000 donation from the Admiral Insurance *COVID Support Fund*. This fund was set up to acknowledge the significant challenges that

charities have doing fundraising during COVID lockdowns and



distancing, etc. The Admiral CSF donation will help offset the fundraising revenues that ACNS has lost due to COVID-19 impacts since March 2020.



Yvonne Kaiser hands over the cheque to ACNS ED Chris Aucoin.

While the donation was announced in June, Yvonne Kaiser dropped by on July 15 with the cheque! Thanks to Yvonne, Lavilla Dykeman and all the staff at the Halifax office of Admiral Insurance – and especially Addison White for recommending us for consideration!

Check out the little video they made about ACNS and our work to accompany the announcement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2Qb6zPKqDQ>.

The Carnation Massage Clinic at the Canadian Massage and Hydrotherapy College continues to offer massage therapy services for people living with chronic conditions, including HIV. CCMH students are introduced to many health conditions, including those that are less visible to many of us. These “invisible illnesses” can benefit greatly from the physiological and psychological effects of therapeutic touch. Call 902.832.3268 or email cliniccoordinator@collegeofmassage.com to book an appointment. Appointments are \$20. The College is located in Suite 180, 6960 Mumford Rd.

Street Smarts

Street Smarts is a harm reduction education program being offered by ACNS. It is a three-part online learning program through Teachable to educate participants about HIV, Hep C, Safer Sex, Overdose Prevention, and Harm Reduction.

Our second session of Street Smarts in 2021 has just ended. Our former student, Andrew, helped re-work the content for the Street Smarts program based on participant and staff feedback. This new content was launched in May 2021. Both sessions have been successful, with

approximately thirty participants having signed up for the program each time. We have put the program on hold for the month of August and plan to return in the fall!

To find out more contact Dylan.

What's Going On?

September

- Mon Sep 6 (Labour Day) - **ACNS CLOSED**
- Thu Sep 30 (Truth & Reconciliation Day) - **ACNS CLOSED**

October

- Mon Oct 11 (Thanksgiving) - **ACNS CLOSED**

November

- Sat Nov 6, all of Nova Scotia +
BMO Bid for ...CHANGE
See **page 3** for details or contact **Jennifer**
- Thu Nov 11 (Remembrance Day) - **ACNS CLOSED**
- Nov 16
ACNS U=U Campaign Launch
- Nov 22-26
AIDS Awareness Week / National HIV Testing Week

December

- Wed Dec 1
Red Scarf Project
See page 1 or contact **Jennifer**
- Wed Dec 1
ACNS World AIDS Day Vigil
Contact **Dylan**
- Tue Dec 14, 3 - 6 pm 5516 Spring Garden Rd. Halifax
ACNS Holiday Open House
Contact **Dylan**

Want to Contribute

We would love to hear from you! If you know of events coming up, or have any info you would like to share, contact Chris.

Our Funders

Funding Partners

- Public Health Agency of Canada
- NS Department of Health & Wellness
- NS Department of Advanced Education and Labour
- Gov. of Canada (Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy Fund)
- ViiV Healthcare Canada (Positive Action Grant)
- The J&W Murphy Foundation
- Nova Scotia General Employee's Union (NSGEU)
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Main Corporate & Business Supporters

- Admiral Insurance
- BMO Financial Group
- Gilead Sciences Canada, Inc.
- Westjet
- Docaitta Design
- RBC
- MAC Cosmetics / MAC AIDS Fund
- The Atlantica Halifax

Staff Directory

AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia

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