



+ POSITIVE DISPATCH

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BMO Bid for Change - Nov 19

The bidding is underway for the **BMO Bid for Change!** ACNS is holding this online auction in support of our advocacy, education and HIV/AIDS awareness efforts.

We have an incredible Door Prize at the ready, including a two-night stay at a White Point One-Bedroom Oceanfront Cottage for two, a weekend car rental and \$300 spending cash available for a lucky winner.

Along with this are great auction item packages including "Dine Around Town", "Pamper Your Pooch," "Arts & Entertainment", a huge collection of art and two tickets for anywhere WestJet flies.

Get in on the action now, and purchase your tickets at www.tinyurl.com/B4C-Tickets. See also the ad on page 2.

Holiday Hours & Assistance

ACNS will close for the holidays at 4 pm on Thursday, Dec 23rd and we will re-open on Tuesday Jan 4th at 10 am. Should you require assistance during this period, contact 211 for information about government and local community programs and services; HealthLink at 811 to speak with a nurse about non-emergency health information or referrals to other services; Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team at 1-888-429-8167 for mental health crisis support; Mobile Outreach Street Health at 902-429-5290 for on-site healthcare services (in Halifax only). For a medical emergency, go to your nearest hospital.



Knitters & Volunteers Needed!

ACNS is launching the **Red Scarf Project-Halifax** on Dec. 1st, World AIDS Day. The



Student Intern Jennifer joins Support Coordinator Dylan, and ACNS ED Chris modelling scarves already donated!

Coalition is asking for knitters and crocheters in the community to reach out if they'd like to help make scarves. We also need volunteers who will help us tie scarves around lamp posts and fences in downtown Halifax to look like oversized red ribbons.

Red Scarf PROJECT-HALIFAX



The scarves will have HIV testing, treatment and anti-stigma messaging attached—messages about the reality of what HIV means in 2021. They will be free to whoever would like to take one.

We are looking for red, knitted or crocheted scarves that are 60 inches long and six inches wide. They can be any pattern people like and we would love these donations for this important cause. If you don't knit or crochet, please consider donating red yarn or volunteering to tie the scarves in Downtown Halifax on Dec. 1st, 2021.

Anyone interested in making a scarf, donating yarn, or helping out on Dec.1st please contact Jennifer.

In Memoriam 2021

Rene, Calvin

ACNS PRESENTS

BMO Bid for... CHANGE

Bid. Lounge. Win!

Your
ABSENCE
is requested.

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

Buy Your Tickets Now To Our
'No-Gala' Gala!*

NOVEMBER 19, 2021

LIVE-STREAMED @ 7 PM

- Early-Bird Draw Nov 8 / Main Draw Nov 19
- Online Silent Auctions Nov 5 - 18
- Preview of Big Changes coming to ACNS ...

IN SUPPORT OF

**AIDS
Coalition**
of Nova Scotia



TITLE SPONSOR



GOLD SPONSORS



SILVER SPONSOR



* Info & Event UPDATES: www.tinyurl.com/BidforChange

TICKETS: www.tinyurl.com/B4C-Tickets

AIDS Vigil: Live + Virtual

This year's World AIDS Day Vigil, our first-ever hybrid Vigil, will be on Dec 1st starting at 7 pm with doors open at 6:30 pm. This will include both an in-person gathering AND live-streaming of this event on Zoom for those who wish to participate virtually. Should there be need to cancel the in-person Vigil option, we will still hold the virtual Zoom event.

It is always important to come together to remember and celebrate those with HIV/AIDS who have passed away in Nova Scotia.

LIVE: The in-person part of Vigil will be at the Italian Cultural Centre (ICC) at just north of North St at 2629 Agricola St. in Halifax . There we will be physically distancing, masks will be mandatory, proof of vaccination checks will be done at the entrance, and space will be limited – registration in advance is required. The ICC is wheelchair accessible, ASL interpretation is provided, and the venue is on several bus routes. This event is also designated scent-free.

VIRTUAL: The virtual part of Vigil will be live-streaming using Zoom, so those who cannot attend in person will be able to do so from home – including being part of the program! For this registration in advance is also required.

For both the in-person event and the Virtual (Zoom) event registration is required in advance. For those who wish to attend in-person, please RSVP at PC@acns.ns.ca with "Live Vigil". For those who wish to attend via Zoom, please RSVP at PC@acns.ns.ca with "ZOOM Vigil" in the subject line.

Christmas Hamper Program

ACNS is gearing up to offer its annual Christmas Hamper Program. This hamper programs helps PLHA parents with dependent children who need assistance during the holiday season. We are currently looking for families in Nova Scotia who fit these criteria. If you need such assistance – or know of an ACNS client who does – please contact Dylan.

we have ...

Cell Phones & Minutes

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



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



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.



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, we were planning on doing PLHA client consultations and a series of 2SLGBTQIA+ consultations 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!



Wednesday Dec 1st 7 PM

Zoom (advance registration required) +
Italian Cultural Centre, 2629 Agricola Street, Halifax
(space at ICC is limited - advance registration required + masks and proof of COVID vaccination also required)

All Are Welcome • FREE
sign language interpretation • wheelchair accessible • scent-free

PC@ACNS.ns.ca 902-425-4882 x 225

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.

Webinar Series on HIV & Ageing

“The Link Online”, a community knowledge sharing program from Gilead Sciences, Inc., is hosting a series of interactive discussions on HIV and aging. Each week, Canadian expert panelists and community moderators will provide up-to-date scientific information on different aspects of the topic.

Men, HIV, & Ageing

Friday, Nov 19th, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Moderator: Ron Rosenes, Speaker: Dr. Julian Falutz

Ageing Well with HIV

Friday, Nov 26th, 12:00 PM–1:30 PM ET

Speakers: Dr. Kelly O’Brien and Dr. Francisco Ibanez-Carrasco

To register for this webinar series, you can go to:

https://www.research.net/r/HIV_ScientificExchangeWebinars_2021_EN_Registration .

3rd Dose COVID Vaccine

In Nova Scotia, people living with HIV who have a CD4 of less than 200 can now get a 3rd dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. "Immunocompromised people, including those taking medications that can substantially affect their



immune system, are at higher risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization recommends 1 additional dose of COVID-19

vaccine for moderately or severely immunocompromised people to increase immune response to the virus.”

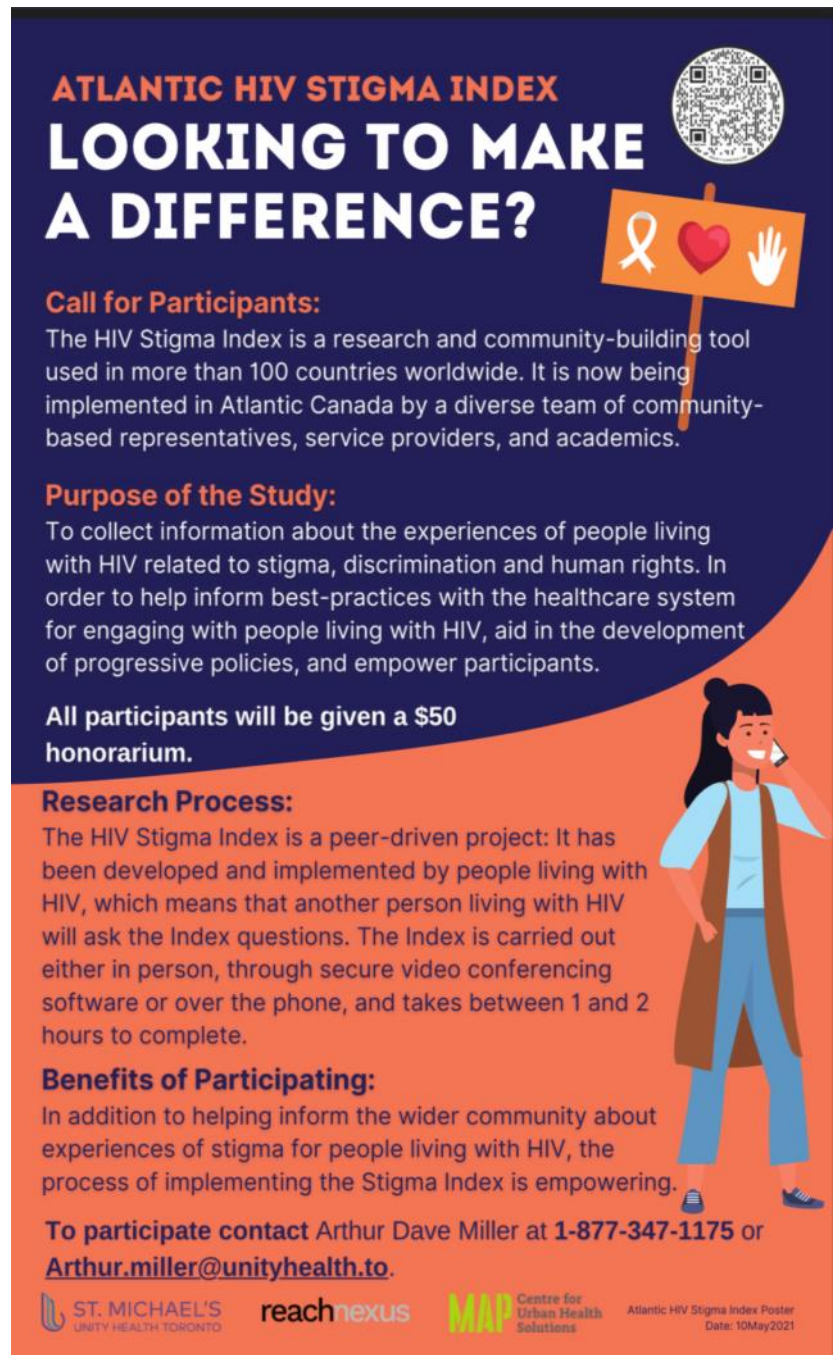
Moderately or severely immunocompromised people who received 2 doses of COVID-19 vaccine can receive 1 additional dose at least 28 days after their last dose. You can book your appointment at <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/#additional-doses> .

\$50 Stigma Research Honorarium

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. (See also page 6 about a Stigma Index job posting.)

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

AAW 2021: HIV is Different Now!

For **AIDS Awareness / HIV Testing Week**, ACNS is launching our first public awareness campaign in more than a few years.

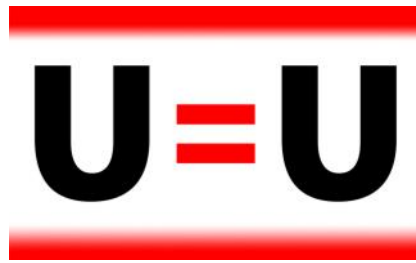
Thanks to a small grant from ViiV Healthcare, we'll be placing ads in a variety of social media outlets. The campaign is called "**HIV is Different Now**" and consists of a series of messages about what a prevention, testing and treatment looks like now.

It's been our consistent observation for a long time that most of the general public — as well as too large a portion of our HIV priority target communities — do not have up-to-date info to inform their HIV testing and prevention behaviours.

So this campaign will provide a series of short and direct statements to address the current realities and the considerable progress made regarding things like HIV self tests and U=U.

The campaign will launch on Nov 24 with the media ads, press release, etc. Key messages from the campaign will also be attached to the red scarves we'll be placing in public spaces in downtown Halifax Dec 1 — World AIDS Day (see page 1 for the Red Scarf Project details).

For more info about the campaign go to www.tinyurl.com/HIVisDif, or contact Chris.



\$50 Nutrition Research Honorarium

Dr. Philip Joy of MSVU is conducting a research study focused on current food and nutrition knowledge, programming, and resources available to people living with HIV-AIDS in NS.

Dr. Joy is offering a \$50 honorarium to participate in an on-line interview (or in-person should COVID-19 restrictions allow) that will be about 60-90 mins and will be recorded with consent for analysis. The interview will focus on about HIV/AIDS programming in NS, particularly nutritional programming.

PLHAs in NS face barriers to meeting their healthcare needs, including nutritional needs. Optimal nutrition is critical to the health and wellbeing of PLHA in maintaining their immune system and preventing disease progression. It is important that PLHA receive nutrition knowledge and foods skills, programming, and support to sustain and improve their health and quality of life. Despite this, there is a lack of knowledge and resources in NS on the impact of stigma, homophobia, and food security on nutritional programming.

Eligibility for the study requires that participants live in Nova Scotia, self-identify as a person living with HIV/AIDS, be 19 years of age or older, and are able to speak and understand English. If you are interested in participating or want more info, please contact Dr. Joy at phillip.joy@msvu.ca.

HIV ^{is} Different Now

*Both HIV prevention and HIV treatment have changed so much... Are you up to date?
To find out more about what HIV means in 2021 go to:*

www.tinyurl.com/HIVisDif



Know Your Status!
Get Tested • Get Treated
End HIV

supported by a grant from



HIV+ Peer Job Posting

Want to be a community researcher to highlight HIV positive people's strengths and reduce stigma?

The Canadian HIV Stigma Index is seeking an Atlantic Peer Research Associate. The application deadline is Nov 26, 2021.

The Stigma Index Team is seeking one highly motivated, enthusiastic individual in Atlantic Canada to fill a part-time, intermittent, 6-month service provider position of "Peer Research Associate" (PRA) in *The Canadian People Living with*

HIV Stigma Index, a community-led, multi-site study to document the experiences of HIV-related stigma resilience.

PRAs will be trained to recruit participants, coordinate and conduct study interviews by phone, tablet, and in some cases



in-person. They will also complete administrative work associated with study surveys including maintenance of records and invoicing. In addition, PRAs will be trained in self-care techniques.

Eligibility Criteria: In this study a PRA is defined as a person living with HIV/AIDS. All candidates must be willing to have their HIV-status be known by interviewees and the research team. PRA must be available for three (3) days of paid training.

For full details on this job posting contact Dylan. See also page 4 about being a research subject for a \$50 honorarium.

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

Learn more at cantpassiton.ca

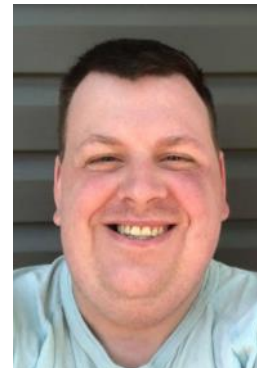
CAN'T PASS IT ON **CATIE**

Canada's centre for HIV and hepatitis C information

Everyone about treatment should always be made in consultation with a medical professional. Knowledge about HIV, Hepatitis C and their related conditions comes from the Public Health Agency of Canada and Global Partners Canada, Inc. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the authors. For more information, visit the websites and resources: www.catie.ca

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Welcome Jordan



Jordan Parker

Jordan Parker (He/Him) is our Event Marketing Manager Intern this fall at ACNS. He has a Masters in Investigative Journalism from the University of King's College, and an Advanced Diploma in PR from NSCC Ivany campus. A freelance

journalist and owner of arts and entertainment firm Parker PR, Jordan has been lending his skills to ACNS in support of events like the Red Scarf Campaign and BMO Bid for Change.

Parker is an award-winning writer and communicator who also volunteers with Halifax Pride, the International Association of Business Communicators, and has helped the Halifax Mussels 2SLGBTQIA+ and allies hockey team. He loves movies and runs a film review site called Parker & The Picture Shows, and is an unabashed Toronto Maple Leafs fan, coffee snob and foodie.

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.

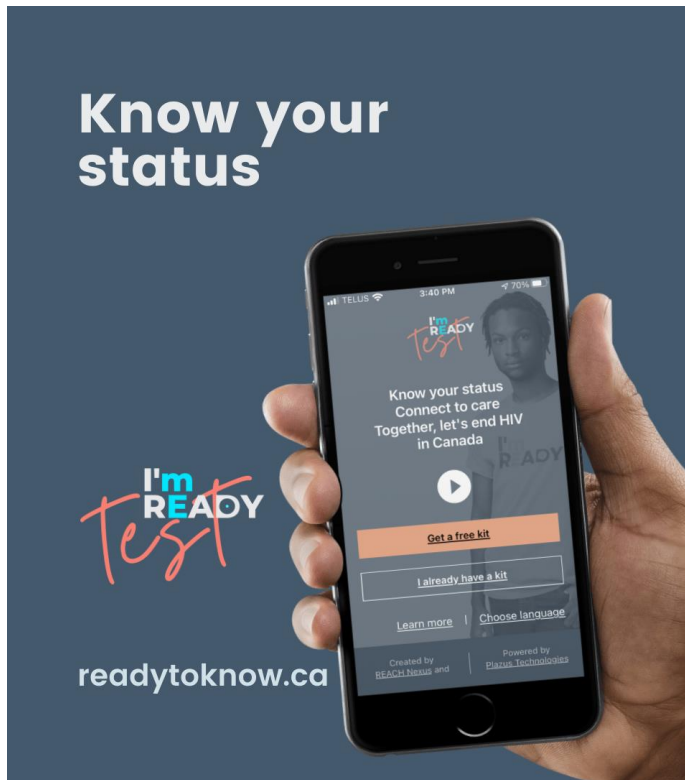
To participate in the program, participants will need an iOS or Android

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/>.



\$25 Trans Research Honorarium

"Forgotten lives: The experiences of Trans older adults with dementia" is a research project by two professors in the School of Social Work at the U. of Ottawa, Marjorie Silverman (cis woman, she/her) and Alexandre Baril (Trans man, he/him).

This research aims to examine the lived experiences of Trans older adults with Alzheimer's or dementia and their support networks, with the goals of:

- Exploring and documenting how the intersections of gender identity, cognitive disability and age are experienced in everyday life;
- Exploring and documenting the everyday realities of intersecting oppressions and forms of discrimination they experience; and
- Developing recommendations for practitioners working with these populations.

This research is being conducted from a Trans-affirmative and disability and anti-ageist perspective, and aims to improve lives and give back to these communities through a vast array of knowledge dissemination activities.

The researchers are available to meet with participants by videoconference, in either French or English. They are looking to recruit Trans older adults with dementia, as well as carers who are supporting a trans person with dementia. For more info contact trans.dementia.project@gmail.com.

Heating Assistance Rebate

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program helps low-income Nova Scotians with the cost of home heating. Rebates range from \$100 to \$200 and is based on your 2020 net income, as reported to Canada Revenue Agency.

To qualify for the rebate, you need to pay for your own home (residential) heat and meet 1 of the following criteria:

- have a net income of \$29,000 or less and live alone with no kids or dependents;
- have a combined net income of \$44,000 or less and live with kids, dependents or other adults;
- receive Income Assistance from the Department of Community Services; or
- receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or the Allowance from Service Canada.

If your personal or financial situation has changed since last year, you still may qualify. Examples of changes include becoming widowed, getting divorced or legally separated, losing your job, turning 18, recently arriving in Canada, or having the custody of your children change. Contact the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services to find out if you qualify.

You can apply until 31 March 2022. For more info, call 902-424-5200 or 1-800-670-4357. <https://beta.novascotia.ca/apply-heating-assistance-rebate-heating-assistance-rebate-program>



Massage Clinic

The Invisible Illness Clinic (formerly 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.



Rent Control Extended

The Provincial government has announced that rent control that was put in place in response to COVID-19 will continue until Dec. 31, 2023.

The premiere announced in October that the interim residential rent-cap extension will limit residential rent increases to two per cent per year to protect tenants once the state of emergency ends.

It's a change in direction for the premier who said in August that he doesn't believe extending rent control past the state of emergency brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic is a solution to the housing crisis. The

government says it will spend nearly \$35 million to support the creation of over 1,100 new affordable housing units across the province.

What's Going On?

November

- Sat Nov 19
BMO Bid for Change
See **page 1 and 2** for details or contact **Jennifer**
- Nov 22-26
AIDS Awareness Week / National HIV Testing Week
See page 5 or contact **Chris or Dylan**
- Nov 24
ACNS "HIV is Different Now" Campaign Launch

December / January

- Wed Dec 1
Red Scarf Project
See page 1 or contact **Jennifer**
ACNS World AIDS Day Vigil
See page 3 or contact **Dylan**

- Wed Dec 1-7,
Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week 2021
<https://caan.ca/events-and-workshops/indigenous-aids-awareness-week/>
- Fri Dec 24 – Mon Jan 3 inclusive
ACNS Offices - CLOSED FOR HOLIDAYS
We re-open Tue Jan 4. See write up **page 1** for details.

February

- Mon Feb 21 (NS Heritage Day) - **ACNS CLOSED**

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
- ViiV Healthcare Canada
- 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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www.ACNS.ns.ca

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