



# + POSITIVE DISPATCH

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## Woody's March Fab 50/50

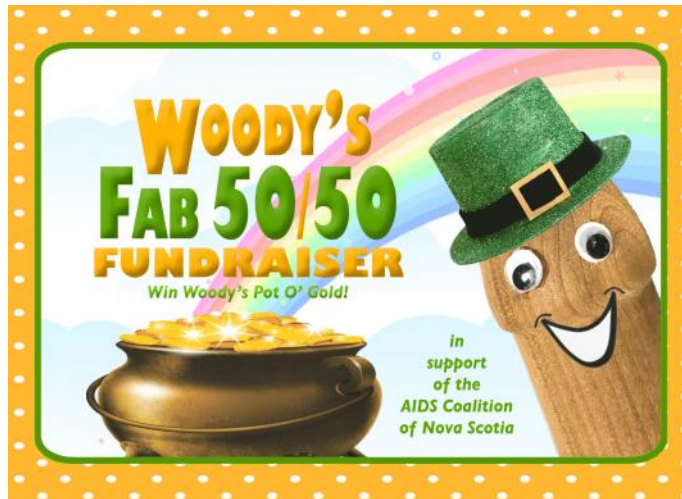
Announcing Woody's newest Fab 50/50 Fundraiser! In a draw to take place live on Facebook on March 18th, one lucky winner will win half of Woody's Pot of Gold! Invite your friends to buy tickets as well! The more tickets sold - the BIGGER the prize!

Ticket prices are 1 for \$10, 3 for \$20, 10 for \$50, and 25 for \$100. Visit [www2.rafflebox.ca/raffle/acns](http://www2.rafflebox.ca/raffle/acns) to buy yours before midnight March 13<sup>th</sup>!



Also, follow the ACNS Facebook page for updates – and to see what Woody's been up to (he posts about every other day!).

And, congratulations to our 50/50 winner in December of \$845.00 Michael Sangster!



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 needs a phone (or minutes) – please contact Dylan.

## In Memoriam

**Rene Corbett**  
1944 – 2021

Long-time ACNS Board Member Rene Corbett passed away January 11th. His death was not unexpected and, as he lived life, he went out on his own terms.

Rene was a kind and thoughtful man, always considerate of others. He loved to laugh and was always making others laugh too. Born in Mount Pearl, he was a proud Newfoundlander. True to his NFLD roots Rene loved to tell a good story – and there were an interesting many. His contributions to ACNS and his larger than life personality will be missed.



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.



## Annual General Meeting



The Annual General Meeting of the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia (ACNS) will be held on Thursday June 24. The location is yet to be confirmed. The meeting will begin at 6:00 pm, with registration at 5:30 pm. For

more information contact Chris.

## Online Engagement

Staff have been posting regularly on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter about ACNS's work, HIV and sexual health for everyone, and broader health and wellness for the 2SLGBTQ+ community in particular. Our work targeting 2SGBTQ+ men through online platforms like Squirt, BBRT, Manhunt, etc is still ongoing.

Through this work we are connecting folks primarily to testing services or PrEP prescribers. Fielding questions about general 2SLGBTQ+ knowledge, COVID-19 & hooking up, PrEP costs, and similar topics are also common.

The outreach presence through Grindr is currently on hold due to internal errors with access to the platform. Once resolved ACNS will continue to be accessible for sexual health outreach on Grindr once again. Folks with questions are encouraged to seek us out on other platforms if needed, or may contact our Health & Wellness Educator Mitch directly.

## 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>.



## Join the ACNS Board

The Board of Directors of ACNS is looking for new members. People living with HIV/AIDS are especially encouraged to apply. People interested in being considered should



contact Chris by Tuesday Apr 27, 2021 to express their interest.

## 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.



This program is open to Nova Scotians who use drugs – especially (but not exclusively) those under 30. Sign up and learn the

skills you need to know to best protect yourself and your peers. Learning modules can be completed at your own pace once registered. There is a 50\$ honorarium for completing the course.

For more information, or to register, give us a call, text or email! If you live on Cape Breton Island, contact Mitch. If you live within mainland Nova Scotia, contact Dylan.

## Trauma-Informed Training

In partnership with PEI's PEERS Alliance, ACNS continues to offer an online blended-learning training program for service providers, "Trauma-Informed Care & Approaches – The Basics". It consisted of two Zoom sessions, set a week apart. This virtual program is offered across Nova Scotia and PEI. The



instructor is Registered Social Worker Shannon Hardy, a Certified Clinical Trauma Specialist, and a professional consultant. Recruitment for our Winter session was successful - all of the spots in both groups were filled and there was a waitlist. There will be another offering of the training program in the spring. If you want more information about the workshop or are interested in signing up, contact Dylan.

## Welcome Joyce!

**Joyce Sseguya-Lwanga** (She/Her) is the new Fund Development Co-Op Student Intern for this winter's 15-week placement.

Joyce is a fourth-year student at St. Mary's University looking to finish her Bachelor of Commerce this winter with a major in finance. She's excited to apply her previous co-op experience and all she's learnt in the classroom to the office and learn from everyone around her. In her spare time, you'll be sure to find her sewing or crocheting, watching a movie, or sitting down with a good book.



Joyce Sseguya-Lwanga

## CATIE Turns 30!

CATIE began as "Treatment Update", which was published in 1989 through AIDS Action Now's



Treatment Information Exchange project. It wasn't long before it became its own organization separate from AIDS Action Now. "Treatment Information Exchange" changed its name to "CATIE" and incorporated in 1990 and quickly established itself as the prime national creator of print-based HIV educational materials.

In (a COVID –delayed) celebration of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, CATIE has released a four-part video series. The first video highlights the history of CATIE and the broader history of HIV and AIDS in the 1980s and early 1990s. The second discussed how HIV treatment has evolved since the success of combination therapy in 1996 and how the focus eventually shifted from "treatment access" to "information access". The third discussed the history of prevention, such as the advent of PrEP, the U=U campaign, and the importance of knowledge as prevention. The fourth and final video discusses the history of Hepatitis C, its treatment, and how CATIE has partnered with healthcare providers to make screening more accessible.

To see this video series, go to <https://mailchi.mp/catie/30anniversary?e=d509e7eb97>.

## Virtually OUTright

Our virtual adaption of our Totally Outright sexual health leadership training program concluded in mid November. The program brings 2SGBTQ+ guys together to learn about a variety of topics ranging from sexual health and queer and trans identity, to indigenous activism and personal development and everything in between. In total 8 participants completed this COVID modified offering. Participants each received honoraria for their learning efforts and contributions, in addition to a certificate of completion! Every participant also received a package of education resources and materials.



The remaining work for this offering of Totally Outright will wrap up in the spring with follow-up surveys being issued to the program participants to measure changes in their behaviours impacted by learning through the program.

Totally Outright 2020 presented unique challenges being reworked to fit a virtual model. While our number of participants was down from our usual 16-20, overall the program was a success and a beneficial learning experience for participants and staff. Going virtual has already informed the team on how to adapt other program offerings to a virtual space through these COVID-impacted times.

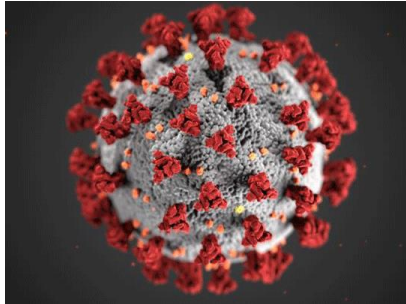
## Bid Event Gets a Makeover!

Save the date! Put Saturday, May 15th in your calendar now! Watch for details coming soon about our entirely new ACNS fundraiser concept! For more info contact Chris.



## COVID & Making Ends Meet

ACNS is continuing to offer new hygiene products for free to our clients on a monthly basis. In addition to products such as dental supplies, shaving supplies, bodywash, shampoo, menstrual supplies, and toilet paper, in addition to offering COVID supplies – we have a supply of bottles of hand sanitizer (both large and small), along with disposable and reusable masks.



ACNS clients can come into the office to pick up supplies during our office hours. We recognize that this schedule may not work for everyone so please let us



know and we will work with you to find alternate times. If you are not able to come to the office, let us know and we can try to make arrangements for contactless delivery. Contact Dylan for more information.

## End-of-Life Research

Researchers at McGill and the Ottawa Hospital invite you to contribute to a study - "Factors Associated with Willingness to Participate in End-of-Life HIV Cure Research: Perspectives from People Living with HIV in Canada."

The goal of this study is to better understand the point of view of people living with HIV, and what they think about end of life research; to identify factors associated with willingness to participate in end-of-life HIV cure research; to identify ways to improve the participant experience in end-of-life HIV cure research and make the process more meaningful; and to explore how much people with HIV already know about end-of-life research for HIV cure and inform potential participants about this field of research.

Participation is confidential and entirely voluntary. Participants must be living with HIV and be 65+ years old OR have a terminal condition. The study consists of a survey (30-60 minutes; on the phone or internet) and an optional in-depth interview (60 minutes). The researchers are offering compensation for your time.

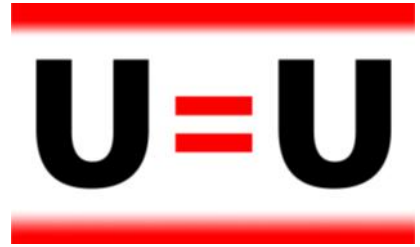
To participate contact: [david.lessard2@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:david.lessard2@mail.mcgill.ca). For more information: <https://www.cancurehiv.org/blank-15/would-you-be-willing-to-donate-your-body-to-help-find-a-cure-for-hiv>.



## U=U Campaign Coming

**U = U** (Undetectable HIV = Untransmittable HIV) is based on the overwhelming force of real world and research evidence assessing Treatment as Prevention (TasP) including the HPTN 052, PARTNER, PARTNER 2, and Opposites Attract research studies, and the early research overview known as the Swiss Statement.

The Prevention Access Campaign—an international coalition of HIV advocates, activists and researchers who are spreading the word



that undetectable HIV is untransmittable—has turned this scientific evidence into a simple message: U = U. Researchers from all the major treatment as prevention studies have endorsed this message—as has the Government of Canada. See [www.acns.ns.ca/info-resources/u-u.html](http://www.acns.ns.ca/info-resources/u-u.html) for more detail on U=U and an overview of the research behind it.

In 2019 CATIE launched a national U=U campaign, and ACNS organized a U=U public info session for AIDS Awareness Week. With support and funding from ViiV Healthcare, ACNS will be launching a U=U social media campaign this spring using CATIE's materials (see p.5) with permission. For more info contact Chris.

## Help With Filing Taxes

Do you need assistance with filing your taxes? If your tax situation is fairly simple, we can help! We can help you to file your income taxes so that you can get your HST and other tax credits. We can file as many years as you need to file. We will file the electronically meaning a quick turn-around in getting your Notice of Assessments.

We will be able to start filing your taxes for the 2020 year beginning March 15th, 2021. You will need your Notice of Assessment from the last year you filed, income slips, receipts if you are claiming medical or educational expenses, receipts for RRSP contributions and any other forms required to file your income taxes.

We will also help you to create My Account with Canada Revenue Agency. This will give you access to your personal income tax information – all of which agencies and government programs require from you – and simply at the tips of your fingers. No more calls and being put on hold for 30-plus minutes only to then have to "provide the amount from Line 150 on your 20 [XX] income tax return" - you just login in with a username and password.

You must be present to answer questions that arise during the preparation process and to authorize filing your return. The process takes approximately 30-60 minutes, depending on your tax situation. This service is provided by appointment-only. All COVID-19 restrictions will be in place and all necessary precautions will be taken. To book an appointment, please contact Ned.

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

Learn more at  
[cantpassiton.ca](http://cantpassiton.ca)



Canada's source for  
HIV and hepatitis C  
information.

Decisions about treatment should always be made in consultation with a medical practitioner knowledgeable about HIV. Production of this campaign has been made possible through financial contributions from the Public Health Agency of Canada and Gilead Sciences Canada, Inc. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the funders. For more information about HIV treatment and prevention, visit [www.catie.ca](http://www.catie.ca).

CATIE Ordering Centre Number: ATI-60266 (aussi disponible en français, ATI-60267)

## Heating Assistance Rebate

The Heating Assistance Rebate Program helps low-income Nova Scotians with the cost of heating. Your rebate amount is based on your 2019 net income, as reported to Canada Revenue Agency. To qualify for the rebate, you need to pay for your own home 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
- receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) or the Allowance from Service Canada

You can apply until 31 March 2021. For more information, call 902-424-5200 or 1-800-670-4357 or see <https://beta.novascotia.ca/apply-heating-assistance-rebate-heating-assistance-rebate-program>.

## Massage Clinic

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](mailto:cliniccoordinator@collegeofmassage.com) to book an appointment.. Appointments are \$20. The College is located in Suite 180, 6960 Mumford Rd.

## What's Going On?

### March

- Thu Mar 18, all of Nova Scotia  
**Draw for Woody's "Pot O' Gold" Online 50/50**  
See ad (p1) for detail or contact **Joyce**
- Tue Mar 31, all of Nova Scotia  
**Home Heating Assistance Rebate Deadline**

### April

- Fri Apr 2 (Good Friday) - **ACNS CLOSED**
- Mon Apr 5 (Easter Monday) - **ACNS CLOSED**
- Tue Apr 27, all of Nova Scotia  
**Deadline for Interest in ACNS Board**  
See **page 2** for details or contact **Chris**

### May

- Sat May 15, all of Nova Scotia  
**BMO Bid the Blazes Home!**  
See **page 3** for details or contact **Chris**
- Thu May 20, all of Nova Scotia  
**Draw for Woody's "Royal" Online 50/50**
- Mon May 24 (Victoria Day) - **ACNS CLOSED**

### June

- Thu Jun 24, 6 pm  
**ACNS Annual General Meeting**  
See **page 2** for details or contact **Chris**

## 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)
- Gov. of Canada (Emergency Community Support Fund and the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia )
- The J&W Murphy Foundation
- Nova Scotia General Employee's Union (NSGEU)
- United Way (Atlantic Compassion Fund)
- The Halifax, Dartmouth, and Chebucto West Community Health Boards (NS Health Authority)
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

### Main Corporate & Business Supporters

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

## Staff Directory

### AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia

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