

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 17, 2010

To: VCH staff and Community Partners

cc:

From: Dr. Patricia Daly, Vice President, Public Health and Chief Medical Health Officer and Executive Sponsor, STOP HIV/AIDS Project

Re: STOP HIV/AIDS Project

On behalf of the VCH STOP HIV/AIDS Project leaders we would like to extend our thanks and appreciation for your ongoing participation in the STOP HIV/AIDS project. Your contributions have been significant in our understanding of current services for testing, treatment and care for people with HIV/AIDS as well as those at risk. Your input has been crucial to inform our planning and implementation.

From our engagement with the community, service providers and our literature review of innovative models of HIV testing and care, we have begun developing pilot projects to improve access to HIV testing and care and to improve system coordination.

- Throughout Vancouver Inner City, we have improved access to rapid point of care testing (where testing results are available immediately)
- Population/community-specific pilot projects are being identified based on the current service challenges, focusing on increasing HIV testing, treatment, case management and support. We are working with a variety of programs, partner agencies and clinics.
- VCH STOP HIV/AIDS Outreach Team is in place – a new service model providing comprehensive, flexible HIV testing, connection to treatment, and education. Individuals or agencies can refer to this team. We have attached a one page overview of the team and how to contact them.
- ASOs (AIDS service organizations) that provide support to people living with HIV are reviewing a collaborative proposal to provide peer support and education to extend the work of the STOP HIV/AIDS Outreach Team
- New, expanded HIV testing guidelines have been provided to physicians and other care providers. Under the new guidelines, health care providers are encouraged to routinely offer an HIV test with informed consent to individuals in the following groups:
 - Anyone who presents to acute or community care who has ever been sexually active and has not had an HIV test in the past year
 - Individuals with a past history of sexually transmitted infection
 - Anyone tested for or diagnosed with hepatitis C, any sexually transmitted infection, or tuberculosis

These guidelines will continue to be accompanied by education and support for physicians and other care providers

Along with our provincial STOP partner organizations, we are working with populations experiencing barriers to HIV care - Aboriginal people, gay men, women, youth, immigrant and refugee communities. In early 2011, we will have population-specific plans for gay men and other men who have sex with men, Aboriginal people and women. These plans will be included in consultations with community groups and service organizations in 2011.

The work never stops but it is the season for all of us to catch our breath and enjoy the holidays with family and friends. On behalf of the Vancouver STOP project, we wish to extend our very best wishes to you. We look forward to our continuing partnership in 2011 in supporting individuals and service providers in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Sue Laughlin, Project Manager for the STOP HIV/AIDS project at sue.laughlin@vch.ca or telephone 604-619-3399.

Please forward this email to anyone we may have missed.