



MEDIA RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 20, 2007

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AIDS Walk Petition Demands Government Accountability

Vancouver BC – While the purpose of the AIDS Walk for Life, on September 23rd in Stanley Park, is to support people living with HIV/AIDS, this year’s Walk will also draw attention to the fact the federal government is breaking its promise to people with HIV/AIDS, and the community organizations that serve them. The British Columbia Persons With AIDS Society (BCPWA), which hosts the Walk, plans to circulate a petition at the event calling on the government to fulfill promises outlined in the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS.

“In 1986, the first AIDS Walk in Canada was held by a small group of people living with AIDS, who demanded the government address the HIV epidemic,” says Glyn Townson, Chair of BCPWA. “It’s a shame that 22 years later we still have to repeat the same message.”

The petition outlines the fact that though the government promised to double AIDS funding in 2004, through the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS, AIDS service organizations are actually experiencing a decrease in funding. Projects under the AIDS Community Action Program (ACAP), which include community-based activities in front-line organizations, have not received any funding designated for programs that were to begin in March 2007. It is generally feared that ACAP funding will be abolished, resulting in a drastic decrease in services to people living with HIV/AIDS. At BCPWA, services funded through ACAP include positive prevention, advocacy and prison outreach. Without funding these services may be terminated, potentially impacting thousands of people and their communities.

Individuals, groups and corporations wishing to demonstrate support for people living with HIV/AIDS, can register for the AIDS Walk for Life or come down to the event, which runs from nine am until three pm, to sign the petition. All funds raised at the Walk provide direct services to people living with HIV/AIDS.

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The British Columbia Persons With AIDS Society (BCPWA Society), a non-profit, consumer-driven organization is in its 21th year of operation, is dedicated to empowering persons living with HIV disease and AIDS through mutual support and collective action. As western Canada's largest AIDS organization, with a membership of more than 4,400 HIV+ individuals, the Society provides support and advocacy services, treatment information, and volunteer opportunities to its diverse membership.

Register for the walk at www.bcpwa.org