

# One in Four Canadians don't know they have it

December 1<sup>st</sup> is World AIDS day, and 2015 marks the last year for the international "Getting to Zero" theme – **Zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths.**

The HIV/AIDS Resource Program (HARP) at Group Health Centre (GHC) wants Northerners to join the millions around the world in commemorating those who have passed away from AIDS, and to become aware of the care and support available for those living with HIV and AIDS.

## Zero New Infections

"Being HIV positive is not a death sentence," said Jennifer Jolie, Healthy Sexuality and Prevention Coordinator at HARP. "Treatment and prevention is better than

ever, and at HARP, we can support our clients emotionally at every stage of their journey from day one of their diagnosis."

What's most important for proper care and treatment of HIV is that it must be diagnosed early. The earlier a person is diagnosed as HIV positive, the greater chances that person has of living a long and healthy life – it just needs to be caught.

Every three hours, a person is infected with HIV in Canada. Contracting HIV is 100% preventable – before, during, and after contact. In the past year, there have been ground-breaking advances in antiretroviral treatment (ART). ART reduces the risk of transmission by 90% or more. Just because someone has HIV, doesn't mean they will spread it. The team at HARP can help you figure out what prevention methods are

right for you or someone you love.

## Zero Discrimination

One in 4 Canadians living with HIV don't know they have it. Of the Canadians that don't know, there's nearly a 60% chance they were exposed during heterosexual sex or injection drug use. What's critical to getting to zero? Knowing the risks and forgetting the stereotypes.

HIV is spread by five bodily fluids (*blood, cum & pre-cum, anal fluids, vaginal fluids, and breast milk*). Transmission happens when one of these five bodily fluids are injected into the blood stream or come into contact with mucous membranes (*vagina, opening of the penis, and mouth*). There are many ways a person can contract HIV, including:

- **Sexual contact** – Having unsafe anal and

vaginal sex; having multiple sex partners; or having sexually transmitted infections and/or Hepatitis C (*this is called co-infection*);

• **Injection drug use** – Sharing needles, syringes, rinse water, and other equipment used to prepare injection drugs;

• **Pregnancy, childbirth and breast feeding** – From mother to child, during pregnancy or childbirth or through breast milk;

• **Occupational Exposure** – being struck with a needle stick or injury from a sharp object; and

• **Rarely Blood transfusion/organ transplant.**

**Zero Deaths**  
Almost 25,000 Canadians have died from HIV-related illnesses since the beginning of the epidemic in 1981. Every case of HIV infection is different, and getting the right treatment

## Are you positive you're negative?

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, HARP will be offering a **Walk-in Clinic** for **FREE, CONFIDENTIAL HIV** testing. HARP also offers HIV testing by appointment during regular hours (8:30am-4:30pm). Call 1-888-943-4372 for more information.

### Join us for the Red Scarf Campaign!

Look for our red scarves all around Sault Ste. Marie tied around lamp posts, street signs and fence posts during HIV Awareness week (Nov. 23-27). Post a pic with a red scarf using #RedScarfSSM for a chance to win two free movie passes!

at the right time is the best chance someone living with HIV has at better health and a normal life expectancy – well into their 70s.

The first step is getting tested.

Visit [www.justgettested.ca](http://www.justgettested.ca) for more information, or call 1-888-943-4372 to speak with someone at HARP.

### About HARP:

HARP (HIV/AIDS Resource Program) provides day-to-day education and support for local individuals infected, affected or at risk by HIV/AIDS and related issues. Outreach services are provided with the help of community partners.

*If you think you could be at risk, call 1-888-943-4372 or visit [www.justgettested.ca](http://www.justgettested.ca)*