

### Introduction

To increase awareness of the dynamic social agencies that serve the diverse communities within Edmonton, this *fACT Sheet* provides a summary of **HIV Edmonton** and its history, mission, and the services it offers.

### About HIV Edmonton

HIV Edmonton was founded in 1984, when the global HIV/AIDS crisis was a pressing concern, from a sense of desperation by Michael Phair and a group of close friends as Edmonton braced for its own AIDS outbreak. Originally called the AIDS Network of Edmonton, in 1999 the name changed to HIV Edmonton to better reflect advancements in the area of HIV and AIDS.

HIV Edmonton is a harm reduction agency, working to provide the best education and prevention methods to a broad audience. Science and medicine have come a long way. However, stigma and discrimination continue to be the most significant barriers to survival, driving isolation and lack of support. These barriers continue to constrain the epidemic and are detrimental to health outcomes.

### Vision: Zero

HIV Edmonton's long-term vision is:

- Zero new HIV infections,
- Zero stigma and discrimination, and
- Zero AIDS-related deaths.

### Support and Outreach

HIV Edmonton provides support and outreach to people living with and affected by HIV through different programs. Many of them also experience challenges with homelessness, drug use, and food insecurity. Clients register through a referral and must provide proof of HIV status to participate in programs. Some examples of support and outreach programs offered are listed below (these are subject to change due to public health guidelines associated with the COVID-19 pandemic):

- **Collective Kitchen:** a cooking circle for clients living with HIV with a strong focus on cultural inclusion, to enable them to build connections and increase their capacity to access care and support.
- **Community Connections Program:** provides lunch once a week for clients to build connections with peers in their communities.

- **Drop-In Program:** the drop in (when open) provides two breakfasts and one lunch a week to clients, which allows for both nutritional meals as well as an informal connector with support from staff and peers.

- **HIV and Nutrition Program:** a six-session program that addresses health and well-being through nutrition and offers ways for people living with HIV to use food to develop healthier lifestyles.

- **Paint and Create Session:** art is a powerful tool. These sessions, led by a resident artist twice a month for newcomer clients (immigrants and refugees) living with HIV, enable them to build connections and increase their capacity to access care and support.

- **Ross Armstrong Program:** provides monthly food hampers, toiletries, vitamins, and a much-needed grocery gift card to assist with the tough end-of-month purchases for clients.

### Prevention and Education

To build relationships and capacity within community-based organizations, alliances and networks are formed between health care professionals and the general public to support prevention efforts towards HIV and sexually transmitted blood borne infections (STBBI). HIV Edmonton reaches these varied audiences by developing educational resources and delivering programs on prevention, health promotion, and support using an equity lens to address issues that disproportionately affect communities facing unique challenges. The educational programs and workshops are listed below (note: these are subject to change).

- **Community Animator Initiative:** aims to prevent new HIV infections among African Caribbean and Black Canadian populations in Edmonton by supporting individuals from the community to mobilize their communities and develop culturally appropriate health resources.
- **Community Alliance Syphilis Testing (CAST):** an HIV Edmonton initiative that brings together university students, community-based organizations, and health professionals to advance syphilis testing in Edmonton and surrounding areas. CAST hopes to:
  - enhance overall collective power through active community participation;

- build connections and capacity for mutually reinforcing activities; and
- center the unique experiences of communities facing systemic risk for syphilis acquisition.
- **Peer Education Program:** engages community members living with HIV, and those who are not, to become educators in HIV and STBBI prevention that are reflective of their communities. Sessions occur twice a month and include lessons, discussions, and teamwork to create educational materials/ strategies.
- **Presentations and Workshops:**
  - **Dynamics Workshop:** an intensive two-day capacity building workshop about HIV and STBBI prevention aimed primarily at service providers but open to the general public. Topics covered include: the origins of HIV; the role of colonialism in the spread of HIV; the biology of HIV; HIV prevention, including harm reduction; barriers to testing, prevention, and care of people affected by HIV, including criminalization of HIV.
  - **HIV Basics Presentation:** 1- to 2-hour presentations provided to service providers and/or the general public about HIV and STBBI, including important discussions on health inequities, stigma, and discrimination.
  - **Health Equity Workshop:** a 1.5-hour presentation that explores some of the systemic and structural barriers that present unique challenges in specific communities.
  - **Nursing Student Workshop:** a half-day interactive workshop for nursing students to engage in discussions such as HIV and STBBIs, health inequities, and harm reduction.
  - **Systems Capacity Building Approach:** an organizational capacity building partnership project between HIV Edmonton and an organization/agency serving key population groups (i.e., African Caribbean and Black Canadians; Indigenous peoples). HIV Edmonton builds the partner's organizational knowledge on effective intervention and prevention of HIV, Hepatitis C, and related STBBIs.

### Contact HIV Edmonton

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Hours: Monday to Thursday 9:00 am – 4:30 pm; Friday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. Closed from 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm daily. If you require assistance during this hour, please ensure staff are aware of your arrival time.

Website: [www.hivedmonton.com](http://www.hivedmonton.com)

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The Edmonton Social Planning Council is an independent, non-profit, charitable organization focused on social research.

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