

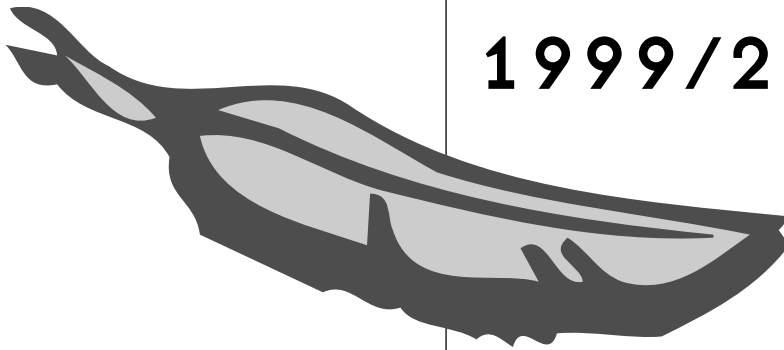
The **BRITISH COLUMBIA**
PERSONS WITH
AIDS SOCIETY
exists to enable persons
living with AIDS and HIV
disease to empower
themselves through
mutual support and
collective action.

From our personal
struggles and challenges
come our courage
and strength.

BCPWA MISSION STATEMENT

BC Persons with AIDS Society

ANNUAL REPORT 1999/2000



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Chair's Report

This past year was a year of changes and excitement for BC Persons With AIDS Society as we continued to provide the leadership expected and required of those of us living with HIV disease and AIDS. The mission of our society is to empower people through mutual support and collective action. This year saw BCPWA participate in a ground-breaking exercise in the fight to acquire Schedule C support for our members forced to live on BC Benefits DBII.

The report was commissioned by the Minister of Social Services in 1998 and was completed in the summer of 1999 recommends an additional allowance of \$411.00 per month. The government balked at this as being too costly. In response BCPWA launched a major campaign – still ongoing – to change the government's position. At the same time our advocacy department continued its stellar leadership on attaining Schedule C through the appeal process, assisting other groups to do so as well.

All departments continued to support the membership through the dedication and the hard work of our 150 regular volunteers and 19 staff. Last year saw extensive use of the lounge, counseling sessions and the creation of a new services (including the LIFE Employment program to assist in returning to work and Treatment ABC's, taking treatment information around the province to members, health care providers and activists).

Living+ developed into one of the best resources available in Canada for treatment information and HIV/AIDS news. The magazine does a wonderful job of presenting the issues of PWA's in BC and it's run by an editorial board controlled by PWA's.

Overall BCPWA matured into one of BC's most effective membership organizations. We continued delivering real services to members, real advocacy and real leadership. We remained Western Canada's largest AIDS organization and one of the most effective anywhere. And we remained committed to our goals of empowering PWA's.

Glen Hillson

1999 / 2000 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair	Glen Hillson
Vice-Chair	Tom McAulay
Secretary	Joel Leung
Treasurer	Jeff Anderson
Members at large	Paul Latham
	Bo Le Drew
	Malsah
	Ken Whitehead



Executive Director's Report

The 1999/2000 fiscal year was a period of rapid growth and success for BCPWA. It was marked, as well, by serious ongoing controversies, and by the beginnings of what should prove to be fully formed proposals for dramatic new directions in the Society's evolution to be presented at the 2000 AGM.

One of the more difficult fiscal problems with which the Society wrestled was where to set the ceiling for the CHF. When the 1998 AGM voted to do away with the CHF waitlist, it was expected there would be a flood of new applicants more than sufficient to bankrupt the CHF at its then ceiling of \$100 a month. In what turned out to be too cautious a decision, that ceiling was lowered to \$35 a month. It slowly became clear that that ceiling was too low, that it was preventing eligible members from taking reasonable advantage of the Fund, and was discouraging potential new applicants. In consequence, less than \$120,000 was paid out in CHF funds last year – the lowest level in almost a decade. On that understanding, and in the wake of the most successful AIDS Walk ever, the ceiling was raised to \$55 a month effective January 1, 2000. By the end of the fiscal year in review, although considerably closer, CHF payouts were still not at the level budgeted. It might prove possible in future, therefore, to consider a further upward adjustment of the monthly ceiling. It must be stressed that *all* of the money collected for the CHF through the AIDS Walks will be paid out through the CHF – none of it has gone, and none of it will go, to any other purpose. The challenge remains bringing Fund disbursements more closely into line with such receipts.

Continued growth in the programs run by and for its members compelled BCPWA to hire new support staff in 1999/2000. Among the new positions created and filled were those of Fund Development Events Coordinator, Prison Outreach Coordinator, and Coordinator of Volunteers. As well, a staff departure occasioned a new person being hired for the existing position of Individual Advocate. And the Director of Treatment Information's position was split 40/60 on an innovative job share arrangement. Finally, a Complementary Therapies Project Coordinator position was established as part of a targeted Health-Canada-funded grant project. At year-end, the

Society employed 19 staff: 16 regular full-time, two regular part-time, and one full-time grant employee.

On the governance front, the Standing Committee structure was fully operationalized. This ensured every BCPWA department was governed by a Board standing committee chaired by a Board member. The committees included designated staff members, department volunteers, and other interested members. Paid staff had voice but no vote. This structure ensured – and continues to ensure – that BCPWA members continue exercise active and decisive control over the work and operations of their Society. At no other time since this writer's arrival at BCPWA on July 1, 1997 has effective member control and direction of BCPWA been stronger or more effective.

Early on, the Positive Women's Network indicated its intention to quit the Pacific AIDS Resource Centre (PARC) Building by the end of the fiscal year; they felt themselves compelled to secure substantially larger quarters than were available to them at PARC. This major diminution in the "scope" of PARC operations and services was viewed sadly, even though the prospect of new space coming available in PARC for BCPWA and AIDS Vancouver was heartening. By year-end, overcrowding and overutilization of available space was perhaps the greatest logistical problem confronting the Society. Continued growth in the membership's requirements of the Society (spurred by the steady growth in the membership itself, up five percent over the previous year, and up more than 16 percent over the 1997/98 fiscal year) has spurred corresponding growth in the Society's efforts – with consequent growth in physical plant requirements. The PARC Building is now "maxed out", and any future growth will require new solutions.

BCPWA has become a fully mature organization. It remains, however, member-directed, consumer-driven, innovative, passionate, scrappy, and always at the forefront of the fight against HIV/AIDS. It is an extraordinary institution.

Respectfully submitted,
Ross Harvey

Communications & Education

Living + Magazine

This was the first full year of publishing Living + Magazine and the feedback has been very positive. BCPWA now estimates that the readership of Living + has grown to 10538 based on information received from our most recent survey.

The survey distributed to the readership of Living + Magazine generated 184 responses, indicating such information as:

- 84% of readers said that Living + had improved "their understanding of treatment information".
- 96% say the publication is "easy to understand"
- 65% of all respondents, and 73% living in rural BC, said they do not have access to "any other source of information that would compare to Living +"
- 54% indicated they have access to the Internet and 33% had visited the BCPWA website.
- 79% of respondents were male, 20% female, and 1% transgendered.

BCPWA Website (www.bcpwa.org)

The BCPWA website exceeded our expectations again this year. BCPWA had set a goal of generating 200,000 "hits" on the website for 1999/2000.

- The web site generated 238,237 "hits" over the whole year.
- On average, 2158 people visited the website each month.
- In March, BCPWA's website had an average total of 772 "hits" each day.

Positive Living Manual

In 1998, BCPWA undertook the production of a second edition of Living Positive, a publication for people living with HIV disease and AIDS. The purpose of this publication is to help HIV positive people take charge of their lives and health.

Five years had passed since the first edition of Living Positive. During that time there had been major advances in treatment of AIDS. Equally significant, the face of AIDS had changed dramatically with new populations becoming infected.

It was in this context that a team of people was brought together to create the second edition. An editorial board composed of HIV positive people was established to make content decisions. Each person brought a particular area of

expertise and understanding to the team.

More importantly, the editorial board members ensured consumer involvement, since all had their own personal experience to draw upon. The research for the publication included reviews of the first edition, other existing publications, and epidemiological data about HIV/AIDS.

Through an analysis of the research, it was determined that the second edition had to be written in very clear, simple language, to ensure that HIV positive people with low literacy levels could use it. Additionally, photographs and a more "reader friendly" design was deemed essential to attract the interest of HIV positive youth.

Three specific goals were established for the publication:

- To provide information to HIV positive people that will enable them to live a more healthy life.
- To improve their understanding of treatment issues related to HIV/AIDS.
- To help HIV positive people cope better with the emotional issues of living with this disease.

With these goals in mind, thirteen chapters were created covering the following issues:

- Staying Healthy (Introduction)
- Understanding Your Medical Condition
- Helping Your Doctor Help You
- Treatment Issues
- Treatment Issues for Women
- Nutrition & HIV Disease
- Reducing Stress
- HIV Disease & Depression
- Money & Working
- Human Rights & Legal Issues
- Relations & Disclosure of HIV Status
- Housing & Accommodation
- Social Supports

In order to ensure that the most current and relevant information was included, experts in various disciplines were contacted and asked to submit contributions, and a professional copy editor, with expertise in medical writing, was retained to edit submissions to ensure the literacy level was appropriate to the target audience. Permission to use



photographs of HIV+ persons from a previously published book was secured, and new photographs were taken to ensure a broad demographic representation. In total, 10,000 copies were printed on a web-based printer.

To publicize the existence of Living Positive and reach its intended audience four major efforts were undertaken. In February of 1999, the first two chapters of Living Positive were published in BCPWA's bimonthly magazine. A launch party was organized in May of 1999 and attended by approximate 150 people from AIDS groups in BC, local media, and health care professionals.

Living Positive was also simultaneously launched on the website of BCPWA. An electronic hyper-linked media release was distributed through AEGIS, a major AIDS information and news distribution website. As a result of the release, hits on the BCPWA website jumped from 655 hits to 2450 within two days.

The online edition of Living Positive continues to be one of the most popular areas of the site. As a result of the preview, publicity, and online edition, BCPWA was swamped with requests for the publication. A comprehensive list was compiled for a direct mailing. In total, over 50 groups and 1780 HIV+ people were mailed Living Positive with surveys in December 1999. Completed surveys rating the content and format of Living Positive were received from 103 HIV positive individuals. "Congratulations on a very important information source," remarked one respondent. "Many people who are, or become newly infected, will find enormous relief and extremely pertinent answers to the questions we've all had."

The ages of respondents ranged from 25 to 76 years old, 13% were women. The average age of female respondents was 41 years old, a bit younger than males, at 44.

Some of the key findings indicate that:

- 96% of respondents found the "information in the publication easy to find".
- 96% of respondents found the writing "clear and easy to understand".
- 81% of respondents found the "information accurate".
- 68% said their "understanding of HIV treatments" had improved.
- 66% said they felt they could "live a more healthy life with HIV disease."
- 47% felt "more able to cope with the emotional issues involved with HIV."

TV Commercials for World AIDS Day [December 1, 1999]

One of the new initiatives identified by the last Board during strategic planning was the production of public service announcements for TV. In conjunction with the Vancouver Film School and National Public Relations, BCPWA undertook the effort to produce a series of TV Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for World AIDS Day. The series was entitled "Beautiful Moments with People Like You... on World AIDS Day". The goal identified for this project was to raise public awareness of AIDS and reduce discriminatory attitudes that some people still hold toward PWAs. For two months, 8 students filmed dozens of people living with HIV, or affected by HIV/AIDS, including friends and family members. They captured emotive images, which were then edited into a "montage" with musical scores in the background. Background research on new HIV infections [BC CDC Stats, etc.] indicated that it was important to select music that appealed to three demographics – those who were experiencing high levels of new HIV infections, or were not experiencing a significant reduction:

- Men, women and youth under 25 years old,
- Women between the ages of 25-39 and men between the ages of 30 to 49, and
- Men and women over 55 years old.

Music was selected to appeal to these demographics and clearance sought from major record companies and labels, including:

- For men and women over 55 years old, "What a Wonderful World" as performed by Anne Murray,
- For women between the ages of 25-39 and men between the ages of 30 to 49, "I Will Survive" as performed by Gloria Gainer, and
- For men, women and youth under 25 years old, "Kiss Me" as performed by Sixpence None the Richer.

The TV PSAs were carried on Global, BCTV and CBC reaching a wide audience. Discussions are underway to produce a second series for this year.

Fund Development

Summary

the Fund Development Department experienced, once again, considerable growth in the 1999/00 fiscal year, increasing not only fundraising revenue, but also BCPWA's profile. As always, the Society's mission and mandate remain the motivation behind all fundraising initiatives. In the 1999/00 fiscal year, more than \$780,000 was donated by generous individuals, community groups and companies.

Changes

Carol Schneider was hired in March as the department's Events Coordinator, taking over from the departing Jay Dodge.

The Future

the coming year we anticipate another tremendously successful AIDS WALK event, including an increase in corporate sponsorship support as well as additional Walk teams and individual participants. We are also pleased to have 12 Community Partners registered for the AIDS WALK 2000. In addition, the Fund Development Department's new database technology permits a more personalized approach to direct mail and telephone communications and, through these initiatives, we hope to strengthen our relationships with existing donors and attract additional support from prospective donors. Furthermore, the Department intends to investigate more thoroughly the availability of funds from local and provincial charitable foundations with the goal of supporting some of the innovative programs provided through BCPWA.

AIDS WALK 1999

The AIDS WALK remains BCPWA's signature event, serving a twofold purpose: to promote awareness of AIDS in the community and, as a fundraising initiative, to support people living with HIV/AIDS. The event, a Vancouver tradition since 1987 and the largest AIDS WALK in Western Canada, had over 7,000 people in attendance in 1999. The Walk generated the highest revenue ever, from corporate sponsorship as well as Team and individual participation, totaling \$410,000. Proceeds from the AIDS WALK benefit the Complementary Health Fund (CHF), purchasing much needed vitamins, bottled water and other essential health items for people living with AIDS. As is the case every year, the event owed its success to our team of over 350 committed volunteers and to

our very generous sponsors, community partners, Walk teams and individual participants. Revenue generated by the AIDS WALK has grown from \$250,000 1997 to \$300,000 in 1998 to \$410,000 in 1999.

Other Special Events

1999 was the inaugural year of HairDo!, a partnership initiative between BCPWA and the Friends for Life Society. This event, which took place on April 22, involved roughly 60 hair salons and more than 350 stylists throughout the Lower Mainland who contributed a percentage of their hair cutting revenues for that day to the two organizations. HairDo! was widely publicized through the media, and by participating salons, and effectively raised awareness of AIDS as a community issue while increasing the profile of both BCPWA and Friends for Life.

Care to Dance, a pledged dance party produced collaboratively by BCPWA, YouthCO., and the Shooting Stars Foundation, occurred for its second consecutive year in 1999. The event took place at the Roundhouse Community Centre and featured local and international DJs. Participants raised money by collecting pledges in advance and the dance was a success both in terms of increasing awareness about HIV/AIDS as well as promoting the three organizations benefiting from the event.

Other Initiatives

Treatment ABCs: On the Road 2000, a mobile workshop established to provide current, understandable treatment information in smaller, under-resourced, under-served communities across BC, and the creation of brochures to meet the needs of people with lower literacy levels, represented two innovative projects developed through BCPWA's Treatment Information Program. In 1999, the Fund Development Department worked in collaboration with TIP to obtain operational support for these initiatives. With the generous support of the pharmaceutical industry, in combination with a federal government grant, the Treatment ABCs program was developed and implemented. It carried on into the 2000/01 fiscal year.



Direct Mail

Two direct mail campaigns were launched during the 1999/00 year. For the first time, a pre-AIDS WALK mailing was sent to BCPWA donors to promote the AIDS WALK and to request a donation to the Society from those unable to participate. The second campaign, the Christmas Be an Angel mailing, generated a modest response rate from donors with a generous average gift amount.

Planned Giving and In Memoriam Donations

Each year, BCPWA receives planned gifts from individuals who wish to leave a legacy to ensure that others may benefit from the services offered through BCPWA.

Friends and loved ones who have passed away are remembered and honoured through charitable In Memoriam gifts to BCPWA.

Corporate Support

There are a number of corporations and businesses that are leaders in philanthropic support to BCPWA. We are grateful to the following companies and businesses for their generous support of the Society in 1999:

- Abbott Laboratories, Ltd.
- Agouron
- Aldo Shoes
- Badboys/Interactive Male
- BC Lottery Corporation
- BCTEL Mobility
- The Boathouse Waterfront Restaurant
- Bristol-Meyers Squibb
- Canada Trust
- Canadian Airlines/American Airlines
- Caper's Community Markets
- CKNW 98
- Creekhous Gallery
- Denman Fitness
- Dupont Pharma
- Durex Condoms
- Famous Players Inc.
- The Georgia Straight
- GlaxoWellcome in partnership with Biochem Pharma
- Granville Island Public Market
- Grey Advertising
- Hoffmann-LaRoche
- IBM
- The Lounge Hair Studio & Spa
- MAC Cosmetics
- Merck Frosst
- Molson
- National Public Relations
- Pattison Outdoor
- Pfizer Canada Inc.
- The Province
- Roots
- Serono Canada
- Starbucks Coffee
- VanCity Credit Union
- Vancouver Television
- WestEnder
- Z95.3 FM

Individual Advocacy Services

General Operations

The Advocacy program opened 1,045 new files during the 199/00 fiscal year. Advocacy services provided to members included:

- BC Disability Allowance Benefits appeals
- Schedule C applications and appeals
- CPP applications and appeals
- Debt forgiveness
- Residential Tenancy issues
- Wills, Power of Attorney and Health care Directives
- Notary services
- Long Term Disability Insurance issues

Schedule C Health Benefits

The Advocacy Department had another successful year securing health care goods, food, vitamins, bottled water and complementary health therapies for members under Schedule C 2(1)(l) of the BC Benefits Program. Our Advocates attended 176 tribunals and won all but one of them. All tribunal decisions were appealed to the appeal board and our Advocates won all cases at the final appeal stage. In this last year, the Department put almost \$900,000.00 dollars of Schedule C benefits into the hands of our members. In total over the last four years the Department has secured over \$1.3 million dollars worth of Schedule C benefits for our members.

Advocacy for the Community

The Department established an outreach advocacy clinic in New Westminster to provide advocacy services to members living in Greater Vancouver closer to their homes. As well, the Department conducted a number of training workshops on advocacy in Vancouver and Greater Vancouver.

Student Legal Clinic

Our Advocacy Department, in partnership with the UBC Law Students Legal Assistance Program, provided free legal services throughout the year at legal clinics held at the Department.

Prison Outreach Program (POP)

The Society hired a Co-ordinator to provide staff support to the POP program. However, POP continued to be primarily run by volunteers. Last year, POP maintained a telephone service (604-527-8605) that received over 500 calls from inmates and persons working with inmates seeking support and information. Program volunteers made regular visits to many federal and provincial correctional facilities to meet with inmates and provide information fairs. The coordinator co-chaired a breakthrough HIV conference in Vancouver for corrections staff and the public on Health, Addictions and Social Justice.



Member & Volunteer Resources

BCPWA's Member and Volunteer Resources Department experienced a fiscal year of growth and change in all program areas. Highlights included:

- Hiring a full-time volunteer coordinator, Gillian Barber, to more effectively recruit and place the almost 200 volunteers needed to carry out the work of BCPWA,
- The recruitment of two additional specialized volunteers to provide services through the Membership Registrar's Office the better to meet member needs, and
- Responding to an expressed need for vocational services from many of our members, by offering on-site employment services in collaboration with community agencies specializing in providing vocational rehabilitation services.

This program recruits, screens, places, orients and follows the progress of volunteers. As well, it coordinates volunteer recognition events and awards, and promotes volunteerism in sectors of the Society's work which require specialized skills.

1999/00 Volunteer Coordination Program achievements included:

- placing almost 100 volunteers in Society programs,
- responding to 279 inquiries related to volunteering,
- interviewing 144 applicants for positions in the Society,
- recognizing over 150 volunteers for their contribution,
- participating in the Non-Profit Roundtable Group, VISIT-the interagency volunteer training initiative for Lower Mainland ASO's, and in a range of events organized by Volunteer Vancouver,
- implementing initiatives to diversify the volunteer base to better represent marginalized groups in the HIV community, and
- recruiting 10 university and college practicum students to work in BCPWA departments as an academic placement.

Training and Development

This program coordinates internal and external training of volunteers and, in doing so, considers transitions and directions in HIV to provide appropriate skill development. As well, in fiscal 1999/00 vocational rehabilitation initiatives were included under the Training and Development Program umbrella. Program achievements included:

- securing a provincial grant to develop a curriculum and training model to meet the specific training needs of marginalized persons living with HIV in order to diversify the Society's volunteer base,

- through the LIFE Employment Program (offered in collaboration with IAM CARES, the program provides a range of employment services to persons with HIV wishing to enter or re-enter the workforce), responding to 155 inquiries, interviewing 76 persons interested in employment, registering 43 in the program and placing 25 in employment or employment-related training, and
- through the Going Forward to Work Program (offered in collaboration with Alliance Health Care, the program provides career exploration services to persons with HIV contemplating employment), responding to 112 inquiries and providing service to 73 individuals

The Membership Registry

This program maintains the Society's membership database, identification and information packages, and statistics. In the 1999/00 fiscal year the program reported:

- a total membership at the end of the year of 4,169 – 3,287 voting, 830 associate, & 52 group members,
- during this period, 63 voting members died bringing the total deceased to 1112 since the registry was developed,
- continuation of the development of an enhanced database to improve data reporting while respecting confidentiality, the recruitment of two specialized volunteers to carry out the Membership Registrar duties providing broader service coverage to members

Administration

The Administration program operates the information counter, responding to over 90 inquiries per day on subjects as diverse as CHF, membership, volunteering, training, benefits and incentive programs. As well, it provides front-line support to the volunteer coordination, membership and training and development programs. It coordinates the lunch recognition program, issuing over 50 lunch vouchers per day, verifies the work of 60 incentive program participants per month, and maintains the Society's volunteer participation records. In 1999/00, Administration achievements included:

- administering the provision of 9914 lunch vouchers to volunteers working at PARC member agencies, and
- in addition to the issuance of lunch vouchers, handling over 7100 inquiries, assisting 167 participants in the Volunteer Incentive Program, and assisting in the issuance of 855 Complementary Health Fund cheques.

Support Department

The BCPWA Lounge

The BCPWA Lounge hosts drop-in days, peer-run groups, rehearsal space for Theatre Positive, working space for the CHF Team and evening meetings of external community organizations. Last year, there were over 16,700 member visits to the Lounge – making it one of the most utilized resources in the Pacific AIDS Resource Centre. The contracting of compassionate, sensitive security staff enhances the safety and comfort of the Lounge's environment.

Complementary Health Fund (CHF)

The CHF provides financial reimbursements to HIV+ members of BCPWA for alternative health goods and services not covered by government or private insurance programs. Last year, this vital program paid out over \$118,000 to 1600 members for holistic health care goods and services used to maintain their health.

Complimentary Tickets

Every year, the arts community donates tickets to movies, theatre performances, concerts and other events for BCPWA members who could not attend otherwise. In 1998/99, the estimated retail value of tickets donated was over \$10,000.

Polli & Esther's Closet

This popular program provides free donated clothing and small household appliances to BCPWA members in need. There were over 2,300 member visits to this program last year. Guidelines in place to assure all members are served with greater equity are working well. An effort to maintain the store in a clean and tidy fashion has been initiated. Over-stock is distributed to various charities who serve HIV+ people.

Hairdressing

Just off the BCPWA lounge is a popular hairdressing program that provides free hair cuts to full BCPWA members. Professional hairdressers completed over 780 haircuts donating 428 hours of volunteer time!

Peer/Support Counseling

Close to 500 individuals received peer counseling through our Peer Support Program last year. Counselors with street experience increased both the comfort level of members and effectiveness of our referrals. A successful four-day, professionally facilitated training was held for volunteers in partnership with BCPWA's Treatment Information Program and Prison Outreach Program and with the YouthCO agency.

Wednesday Night Support Group

This peer facilitated drop-in support group operates in the evening in the BCPWA Lounge, with potluck socials held quarterly. On average, 11 members attended each weekly meeting in 1999/00.

Boys R Us

As part of our efforts to support male youth involved in sex trade work, BCPWA helped establish and continues to participate in a weekly "Boys R Us" gathering. In 1999/00, 35 youth attended the weekly meetings held during the evenings in the South Granville area. This initiative is operated in partnership with several other agencies. An impressive number of the youth have become volunteers at BCPWA.

Christmas Celebrations

The holiday season can be a very difficult time for PWA's who do not have a network of families and friends to be with during the Christmas season. BCPWA enhanced this season for our members by decorating our Lounge, providing a traditional sit-down dinner for 170, and organizing Yuletown, an event held in Lounge that attracted 234 people over two days. Yuletown was organized in partnership with AIDS Vancouver and YouthCO.

Theatre Positive

Theatre Positive presents peer-created and produced innovative theatre performances about living with HIV disease. 1999/00 saw over 400 people attend performances of the theatre group, both in the round at the Carnegie Centre in the Downtown Eastside, and through six performances at the Vancouver Fringe Festival. A writer's workshop, guided by Artistic Director Jake Thomas with visiting professionals from Vancouver theatre community, was well attended.

Retreats

Retreats are an opportunity for our members to escape from the stresses of everyday life and develop friendships and learn new skills. Two retreats were organized last year by a team of volunteers who gave over 1,287 hours of their time to make them a success. One Retreat had a healing focus and the other emphasized spirituality. Seventy-five members attended 3 and 4 day retreats and benefited from the support and knowledge shared. A Policy and Procedures Manual was produced to assist new Team members. There are plans afoot to have it incorporated in the BCPWA web site.



Income Tax Preparation

More than 90 members accessed the BCPWA Income Tax preparation program, staffed by three trained volunteers who donated 65 hours of their time in 1999/00.

One-On-One Peer Treatment Counseling

A total of 735 in-house consultations (not including outreach activities – see below) were held during the year – an average of 61 a month.

Three quarters of those consulting were HIV+, roughly the same number were men (one percent were transgendered). Eighty-three percent were caucasian, eight percent were First Nations persons, and nine percent were of other ethno-cultural identity or their identity was unknown. Thirty-four percent lived in Vancouver's West End, 17 percent in the

DownTown East Side, 25 percent elsewhere in Vancouver, eight percent elsewhere in the Lower Mainland, and 10 percent elsewhere in BC. Three percent were other Canadian contacts and two percent were international.

Those seeking consultation walked in to the TIP office in person in 53 percent of cases, with another 45 percent making contact by telephone (two percent by fax or e-mail).

The most commonly discussed topics included antiretrovirals (42% of persons making inquiries), complementary and alternative therapies (25% of persons making inquiries), conventional therapies (20%), blood work (12%), opportunistic infections (12%), referrals to doctors (9%) and complaints about doctors (3%). Fully 43 percent of persons making inquiries sought information on a miscellany of other topics.

Treatment Information

Publications

LIVING +

In 1999 BCPWA News & TIP NEWS merged together into the glossy, bi-monthly magazine Living +. Each issue devotes roughly half (about 20 pages) to treatment information issues. Each issue contains a combination of original articles (researched and written by TIP Peer Counselors and National Treatment Activists), and reprints from journals and the Internet.

TREATMENT INFORMATION PROGRAM PAMPHLETS

2500 copies were distributed of this series of 8 pamphlets which include:

Alternative & Complementary Therapies, Antiretrovirals, Cure Or False?, Interpreting Your Lab Test Results, Nutrition, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Vitamins & Minerals, and Working Together

HIV/AIDS TREATMENT INFORMATION EASY TO READ PAMPHLETS

Developed as a tool for counselors, in partnership with the Vancouver Native Health Society, we believe these are the first low-literacy pamphlets ever produced to explain HIV/AIDS treatment issues. 1500 pamphlets were distributed to ASO/NGO/Medical Clinics across province and to several ASO's across Canada. Topics include:

Starting HIV Drugs, HIV Viral Load, Immune Cells (CD4) & HIV, HIV Drug Resistance, 5 Ways To Better Health,

Women & HIV, Pregnancy & HIV, Working Together – Dr.'s & Patients, Hepatitis C, Hep C/HIV & Prisons (women), Hep C/HIV & Prisons (men)

Funding was provided by members of the pharmaceutical industry and Health Canada. In March 2000 funding was received to a) translate the Easy To Read Pamphlets into French, b) print up 1500 pads (x 50 ea. of 11 pamphlets), c) distribute nationally through the National AIDS Clearing House.

TREATMENT ABCS RESOURCE GUIDE

Funding was provided by Health Canada in February 2000 for the development, production and distribution of a train-the-trainer guide for presenting the Treatment ABCs Workshop. 200 sets of the Resource Guide were to be available for distribution in April 2000.

WWW.BCPWA.ORG

The Treatment Information Section contains basic treatment issues and information, as well as ready-for-downloading PDFs of the Easy To Read Pamphlets.

TREATMENT INFORMATION FACT SHEETS

In the PARC Library, TIP maintained 32 slots on the information racks, and circulates documents as needed. Between April 1, 1999, and March 31, 2000, approximately 3000 documents were distributed (note: this excludes materials distributed during One-On-One Consultations and Outreach).

Volunteer Development

TIP enjoyed the active participation of approximately 20 regular volunteers during the year. To assist with their ongoing education and development, the Department arranged 10 in-service trainings, including virology 101 with Dr. Mark Wainberg, immunology with Dr. Chris Tsoukas, resistance testing with Dr. Richard Harrigan and others. Regular Treatment ABCs Training provided on an ongoing basis. Peer Counseling Training provided by Support Services.
2 full day New Volunteer Orientation Seminars.

Conferences

Treatment Information Counselors attended and presented at several conferences this year:

Canadian Association for HIV Research (CAHR) Conference
(Victoria, May 1-4 1999)

6 Treatment Information Counselors (TICs) attended

International Meeting on Biopsychosocial Issues in HIV Infection
(Ottawa, July 15, 1999)

2 TICs attended

Presentations: Meditation, Easy To Read Pamphlets

Canadian AIDS Society Skills Building Symposium
(Winnipeg, November 11-14, 1999)

14 TICs attended

Presentations: Treatment ABCs, Meditation, Women and Clinical Trials, Community-Based Research, building a new HIV research agenda

7th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections
(San Francisco, Jan 30, 2000)

2 TICs attended

BC Aboriginal AIDS Conference
(Cranbrook, March 27-29, 2000)

3 TICs attended

Presentation: Treatment ABCs

Community Forums

- May, 1999 – Dr. Chris Fraser (HIV Treatment Update) with Victoria PWA
- September 1999 – Lark Lands (Nutrition & HIV)
- October 1999 – Julio Montaner & Glen Hillson (Antiretroviral Update)
- January 2000 – Chester Morris (HCV/HIV) 90 HIV/HCV + attend

Complementary & Alternative Medicines (CAM)

With funding provided by Health Canada, the position of Complementary & Alternative Medicines (CAM) Project Coordinator was created within TIP. The first phase of the project was a series of workshops aimed at under-served communities to increase the awareness of and capacity for utilization of CAM.

One-hundred and twenty-two persons participated in workshops which included: "Accessing the Complementary Health Fund", "Self-Massage for Stress-Reduction and Wellness", "Eating well with HIV", "Choosing and Accessing CAM", "Shiatsu", "Tai Chi", "Aromatherapy", and "Meditation For Stress Reduction".

Toward the end of the year, the Project received funding from Health Canada, AIDS Treatment, Care and Support to expand and extend the Complementary Therapies Research Project for one year, and for a part time research assistant.

Open House

In partnership with the PARC Library, the Open House on March 23, 2000 was held in the PARC Library with the goals of a) acknowledging funders, b) honouring volunteers, c) highlighting ongoing TIP Programs and Publications, and d) showcasing new program developments including HEPHIVE, CAM, Treatment ABCs Resource Guide, and the Easy To Read/ Facile A Lire Pamphlets.

HepHive

The Hepatitis C – HIV Education Project, in partnership with Vancouver Native Health Society, received preliminary funding from Health Canada in February 2000 to hire staff and open an outreach office to service co-infected members in the Downtown Eastside. The office was to open officially on April 1, 2000.

Outreach

Treatment Information Outreach was conducted weekly across the province of BC (and elsewhere) at HIV+ Support Groups, AIDS Service Organizations, Health Facilities, Non-Governmental Organizations, Federal & Provincial Prisons, Recovery Homes, Health Fairs, and Conferences.

"Outreach" is defined under the following categories:

BIA: Bioelectrical Impedance Analysis

Once a month 12 members received a BIA test and nutritional counseling from Diana Peabody. The BIA machine and operator were provided by Serono. Five such workshops were presented to a total of 60 participants.



Complementary & Alternative Medicines (CAM)

Workshops that deal with one or more aspects of CAM. Eight workshops were presented to a total of 122 participants.

Information Table

Treatment Information Counselors are available at an information table to answer general questions and to provide one-on-one peer counseling if needed. Eleven such "table presentations" were made involving roughly 500 participants.

Q&A

Usually held where time is limited. A one or two hour process where participants lead the workshop on pre-selected topics. Sessions included Antiretroviral Update, Side Effects, OIs, HIV/HCV, CAM, Nutrition, Pregnancy, Children, Addictions, Drug Resistance, Liver Issues, etc. There were six such sessions presented to a total of 52 participants.

Take Charge Of Your Health

A workshop designed to improve communication between patients and their physicians, and to teach PWAs how to interpret and track their blood results. Five workshops were presented for 68 participants with funding provided by Vancouver Richmond Health Board.

Treatment ABCs On The Road

In partnership with The BC Center For Excellence In HIV/AIDS, Treatment Information Counselors presented the workshop to 20 communities across the province (and Whitehorse). The workshop generally runs 2 hours, 4 hours or 8 hours, depending on time allotted and participant's direction. Funded by members of the pharmaceutical industry, a total of 21 workshops were presented to a total of 293 participants.

Treatment Counseling Outreach

One or more treatment information counselors provide one-on-one peer counseling at various outreach sites. This year, about 50 participants were reached through 15 such sessions.

Committee Involvement

Members of the Treatment Information program were active participants in a number of provincial, national and international committees charged with various aspects of HIV/AIDS work. These included:

- Therapeutic Guidelines Committee of the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS (CFE)
- Canadian HIV Trials Network, Community Advisory Committee

- Canadian HIV Trials Network, National Ethical Review Committee
- Community Representative Canadian Association For HIV Research (CAHR)
- BCPWA Collective Advocacy Committee
- Vancouver Richmond Health Board, Scientific and Research Committee
- Canadian Treatment Advocates Council
- Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE), Board Of Directors
- National Advisory Group On Complementary Therapies & HIV/AIDS (CAS)

Advocacy Issues

The TIP team participated in the Society's collective advocacy work on a number of issues during the year. These included:

- Awareness and access to healthcare (re: HIV/AIDS) in Prisons
- Schedule C
- CFE Nutritional Management Guidelines (Developed by: Diana Peabody, RD)
- Regionalization
- Excessive Drug Pricing
- Drug approval process

Research

Members of the TIP team participated in various capacities in a number of research initiatives, including:

- Milk thistle protocol with CFE & Don Zarowny (CTN)
- Canadian Women's Study in HIV/AIDS, Catherine Hank
- CFE Drug Treatment Program on PWAs use of CAM: Specifically healthcare utilization and information sources, sociodemographic and clinical characteristics of people who are using marijuana, and sociodemographic and clinical characteristics of people who are using meditation
- Establishment of an interdisciplinary Advisory Committee that developed research protocol for BCPWA's Complementary Therapies Project.