

ACCOUNTABILITY STARTS AT HOME: With Over 16,000 British Columbians Living with HIV/AIDS, Experts to Declare Need to Redouble Our Efforts

Vancouver, BC – While many high-profile, celebrity-driven AIDS campaigns have caught the World’s attention, Vancouver’s own Dr. Peter Centre is marking World AIDS Day, December 1st, by shining the spotlight on British Columbia...specifically the over 16,000 British Columbians living with HIV/AIDS. Experts including Dr. Julio Montaner will speak to the state-of-affairs in British Columbia and where efforts need to focus to better manage and ultimately eradicate the spread of the disease.

As the only HIV/AIDS 24-hour care residence and day health program in the province, the Dr. Peter Centre is hosting *Reality Check 2006*. In accordance with the UN AIDS World AIDS Day 2006 campaign ‘Accountability: Keep the Promise’, this year’s local event is themed ‘Accountability Starts at Home’.

“Many HIV positive people lack adequate nutrition, lack adequate housing, and many are not even getting life extending HIV treatment,” states Maxine Davis, Executive Director at the Dr. Peter Centre. “And if you think we’re talking about a third world country, think again. We’re talking about Vancouver. People are suffering right here at home. And although British Columbia has an impressive history of leadership in HIV/AIDS care, treatment and support, it cannot blind us to the fact that much more needs to be done so those living with HIV/AIDS can lead dignified lives.”

Davis goes on to say, “The Dr. Peter Centre provides many levels of care to some of the most unwell. We also contribute to preventing HIV transmission by offering supervised injection service. So yes, we offer proven solutions, but until there is a cure, many more need access to those same solutions.”

Data shows that in BC more than one person per day contracts HIV, explaining the increase from 11,000 living with HIV in 2004 to over 12,000 in 2006. The almost 4,000 people that have deteriorated to AIDS brings the 2006 total HIV/AIDS statistics to over 16,000. Province wide, it’s estimated that as many as 3,000 more are HIV positive, but do not know it.

“HIV/AIDS in British Columbia is a complex challenge,” states Dr. Julio Montaner, Director of BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS and President Elect of International AIDS Society. “We need to redouble our efforts in order to dramatically reduce the transmission of HIV as well as dramatically improve the lives of those living with it.”

Detailed information to be released at *Reality Check 2006: Accountability Starts at Home* at the Dr. Peter Centre on Friday, December 1st from 8:00AM to 9:00AM.

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Dr. Peter Centre

Dr. Peter Centre is the only HIV/AIDS day health program and 24-hour care residence in BC. It offers care and support to improve the overall health and quality of life of people most in need. The Centre's innovative programs rely on both donor and government funding to serve the growing need for HIV/AIDS care in our communities.

BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS

The BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS is a key provincial resource seeking to improve the health of people with HIV through the development, ongoing monitoring and dissemination of comprehensive investigative and treatment programs for HIV and related diseases.

See **following** Media Advisory for *Reality Check 2006* event details.

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November 28, 2006

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Experts to Declare Need to Redouble Our Efforts**

Vancouver, B.C. - Dr. Peter Centre is hosting the third annual *Reality Check 2006* to mark World AIDS Day.

An informative gathering and press conference outlining the current state-of-affairs on HIV/AIDS in British Columbia.

Keynote address by Julio Montaner, MD, Director of the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS and President-Elect, International AIDS Society. Maxine Davis, Executive Director of the Dr. Peter Centre, will also speak.

Event: *REALITY CHECK 2006: Accountability Starts at Home*

Date: Friday, December 1, 2006

Time: 8:00am to 9:00am

Location: Dr. Peter Centre
1110 Comox Street
Vancouver, BC
604.608.1874

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