



## African, Caribbean & Black Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

The Canadian HIV/AIDS Black, African and Caribbean Network (CHABAC) and its partners are pleased to announce the first ever **African, Caribbean and Black Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Day** on **February 7, 2015**.

The **African, Caribbean and Black Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Day** will help raise awareness of HIV, promote HIV prevention and contribute to addressing HIV-related stigma in Canada's African, Caribbean and Black communities. This commemorative Day is inspired by the National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day that has been observed in the U.S. on February 7 every year since 1999.

The theme of the 2015 **African, Caribbean and Black Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Day** is: **Use a condom. Get tested. Start a conversation.**

### Use a Condom

Male and female condoms can prevent the sexual transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and are highly effective when used consistently and correctly. There are also other effective prevention options and risk reduction strategies. Talk to your local AIDS service organization or health care provider about what else you can do to reduce your or your partner's risk of HIV infection.

### Get tested

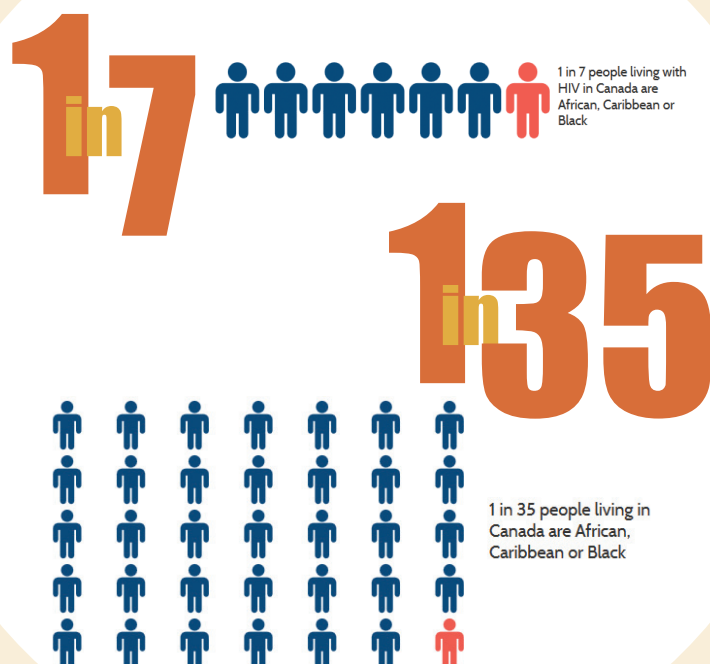
It is estimated that 25% of those living with HIV in Canada are unaware of their HIV status. This number may be even higher in African, Caribbean and Black communities — for example, in the 2008 Ontario Surveillance Report, it was reported that only an estimated 56% of African, Caribbean and Black people<sup>1</sup> living with HIV have been diagnosed (ACCHO, 2011). If you find out that you are HIV-positive you can take steps to stay healthy. Knowing your status can also help you make decisions that can reduce the likelihood of transmitting HIV to others. For information about HIV tests and where to get one, visit [www.HIV411.ca](http://www.HIV411.ca). If you are unsure whether or not getting an HIV test is right for you, talk to a friend, partner, family member or your local AIDS service organization.

### Start a conversation

Lastly, it is important that members of Canada's African, Caribbean and Black communities talk about HIV with family, friends and sexual partners. Start a conversation about how to prevent the transmission of HIV or what it is like to live with HIV, or ask questions to learn about HIV.

Being informed and talking openly about HIV can help to increase awareness and understanding of HIV and AIDS, and reduce HIV-related stigma as well as HIV transmission.

**Use a condom. Get tested. Start a conversation.**



<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this fact sheet we use "African, Caribbean and Black people" to refer to people from countries where HIV is endemic. The term "people from countries where HIV is endemic" is an epidemiologic term often used in HIV/AIDS surveillance and research activities and refers to a population that is largely composed of Black people of African and Caribbean descent. As national HIV statistics are not available for African, Caribbean and Black populations, the above statistic does not account for African, Caribbean and Black people who are not from countries where HIV is endemic, are men who have sex with men or who use injection drugs and therefore is likely to under represent HIV prevalence among ACB people

## Background

- People from African, Caribbean and Black communities are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS in Canada. They represent approximately 15%, or one in seven people living with HIV in Canada while representing only 2.5% of the population.
- The estimated new infection rate among people from African, Caribbean and Black communities is about 9 times higher than among other Canadians.
- In 2011, 22.9% of new HIV infections in Ontario were through heterosexual transmission among people from African, Caribbean and Black communities. In Alberta, this percentage was 21.2%; in Manitoba 19.1%; in Quebec 16.2%; in Atlantic Canada 5.7%; and British Columbia 3.4%; and in Saskatchewan 0.9%. (PHAC 2014)

There are many factors that increase vulnerability to HIV among African, Caribbean and Black people at risk of or living with HIV infection. Among these factors are the experiences and impact of racism combined with

other forms of discrimination, such as those based on gender, sexual orientation and socio-economic status. These factors affect access to information, resources and services, as well as opportunities for making health-related decisions. (Falconer, 2005; PHAC 2009)

Given this broader context, it is important to raise awareness about HIV, promote condom use and regular HIV testing, as well as to open conversation about HIV among Canada's African, Caribbean and Black communities.

### **Canadian HIV/AIDS Black, African and Caribbean Network (CHABAC)**

CHABAC is a national network of organizations, individuals and other stakeholders who are dedicated to responding to issues related to HIV and AIDS in Canada's African, Caribbean and Black communities. Our vision is to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic among the African, Caribbean and Black population in Canada. For more information about CHABAC or to become a member or join the listserv, go to <http://www.icad-cisd.com/CHABAC>. Also, follow us on Twitter @CHABACinfo and like us on Facebook.

#### Sources:

African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario (ACCHO) and Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto. HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Mother to Child Transmission among African, Caribbean and Black Populations as of 2008. ACCHO & Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, 2011. [http://accho.ca/Portals/3/documents/ACB\\_Stats\\_ON\\_Apr2011\\_Final.pdf](http://accho.ca/Portals/3/documents/ACB_Stats_ON_Apr2011_Final.pdf)

Falconer, Dionne A. Springboarding a National HIV/AIDS Strategy for Black Canadian, African and Caribbean Communities Project Environmental Scan Report . Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development, 2005. <http://www.icad-cisd.com/pdf/CHABAC/BackgroundReports/Springboarding-a-National-Strategy-for-Black-Canadian-Afric.pdf>

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