MANDATE

The Ministerial Advisory Council on the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada (MAC-FI) provides unbiased, non-partisan, evidence-informed, targeted and strategic expert advice to the Minister of Health (hereafter referred to as the Minister) on HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C; other closely related communicable diseases such as other sexually transmitted infections, and tuberculosis; other associated factors that influence the health and wellness of those living with these communicable diseases such as the prevention of mental health problems and care for those living with mental illness, problematic substance use, healthy aging; and other determinants of health or inequities that increase vulnerability to the aforementioned communicable diseases.

ROLE

1. To provide advice on HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C and related health factors as described above, in response to priority issues identified by the Minister or the Public Health Agency of Canada (Agency).

2. Signal emerging issues pertaining to its mandate to the Minister or the Agency.

3. To ensure the advice provided is informed by the specific needs and vulnerabilities of key populations at risk of HIV and hepatitis C, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections and by scientific evidence and public health practice.

REPORTING AND SCOPE

MAC-FI will report to the Minister once a year on progress made in addressing ministerial-identified priority issues. Advice generated by MAC-FI is considered as confidential advice to the Minister and its external dissemination is subject to the Minister’s approval.

RESPONSIBILITIES

A) MAC-FI Members

- Provide unbiased, non-partisan, evidence-informed, targeted and strategic expert advice informed by their expertise and experience to the Minister of Health on pan-Canadian aspects of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C prevention and related health factors.
- Attend and participate fully in MAC-FI meetings and teleconferences.
- Participate in MAC-FI working groups, and commit time and expertise to accomplish mandated activities.
• Rise above the corporate interest of any organization with which the member is affiliated, and contribute to a pan-Canadian vision and approach to health promotion and disease prevention.
• Establish objectives, a work plan and timetable annually, based on mandate.
• Work positively, co-operatively and respectfully with other MAC-FI members, observers and Public Health Agency of Canada (Secretariat) staff.
• Respect and support decisions once consensus has been reached.
• Sign and abide by the Agency’s Confidentiality Agreement and the Declaration of Affiliations and Interests Form.
• Exercise and comply with Government of Canada policy (e.g., Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat travel policies) in all MAC-FI activities.

B) Co-Chairs (2)

• Chair meetings and teleconferences.
• Lead work plan development in consultation with Council members and the Secretariat.
• Lead reporting on Council activities in collaboration with Council members and the Secretariat.
• Work positively, co-operatively and respectfully with other MAC-FI members, observers and Public Health Agency of Canada (Secretariat) staff.
• Work with the Secretariat to prepare meeting agendas, minutes and advice to the Minister.
• Lead communications with the Minister in consultation and collaboration with Council and the Agency.

C) Public Health Agency of Canada

• Provides secretariat function for MAC-FI activities (e.g., orientation for new members, agendas, minutes, communications coordination, meeting preparation, accommodation, transportation, teleconferences and advice on compliance with Government of Canada policies).
• Assists in developing, monitoring and reporting on work plan progress.
• Provides policy and positioning advice to advance mandated activities.
• Collaborates with MAC-FI in an open and transparent manner.
• Work positively, co-operatively and respectfully with other MAC-FI members and observers.
• Provides timely access to available public documentation related to the mandate of MAC-FI.
• Ensures the Agency’s senior management is kept apprised of the activities of MAC-FI.
• Provides linkages with other government departments as appropriate to mandated activities.
• Provides resources for MAC-FI to carry out its mandate.
DECISION MAKING

To the greatest extent possible, decisions shall be made by consensus, defined as general agreement either verbally or by poll. The Agency values the advice MAC-FI provides to the Minister and will take under consideration advice provided by MAC-FI in their policy, program, operational and regulatory decision-making.

MEMBERSHIP

A) Appointments and Structure

The Minister will appoint a maximum of 10 members to MAC-FI with collective expertise in HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, other infectious diseases, Aboriginal health, and other health and wellness issues. The goal of the appointment process will be to include representation of people living with HIV/AIDS or co-infected with HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C.

To ensure that advice for MAC-FI includes provincial and territorial considerations, a provincial or territorial ex-officio member will be appointed in consultation with the Communicable and Infectious Disease Steering Committee, and the Public Health Network.

To enhance collaboration and coherence of governance structures, a member of the National Aboriginal Council on HIV/AIDS (NACHA) will be appointed as an ex-officio member to MAC-FI.

The Minister will appoint co-Chairs, one of which may be a person living with HIV/AIDS or co-infected with HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C, from the membership.

Regional and gender representation will also be considered in the Council’s composition.

One or more officials from the Agency may hold ex-officio positions to provide technical advice and to facilitate coordination of activities. Federal government observers may attend meetings, as required.

B) Accountability

MAC-FI members are expected to conduct themselves and contribute to MAC-FI as independent experts notwithstanding their affiliations.

The advice provided by members should reflect the plurality of individuals, communities and sectors infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C and related health factors. The advice must also rise above any corporate interests with which they might be affiliated. MAC-FI is positioned to reflect the health needs and interests of key populations vulnerable to and living with HIV/AIDS and/or hepatitis C.
C) Terms of Appointment

The Minister will appoint members for a three-year term. Members may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms of three years and may be extended at the discretion of the Minister. The Minister may modify the composition of the council and revise its Terms of Reference at any time.

MEETINGS

MAC-FI will meet twice a year in person, except under extenuating circumstances. One of the in-person meetings will be with the Minister to review, discuss and consider its advice. A joint meeting of MAC-FI and NACHA will be held annually to ensure that governance structures are efficiently integrated and that synergies are built between the two committees. Additional meetings can be held by teleconference at the discretion of the co-Chairs and in collaboration with the Secretariat, to deal with issues arising between regularly scheduled meetings and to advance workplan activities.

Members serve as volunteers and are not remunerated for their services. Members will be reimbursed for expenses incurred on approved travel to attend Council meetings, such as transportation and accommodation, in accordance with the Government of Canada polices. These policies include the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Travel Directive and the Directive on the Management of Expenditures on Travel, Hospitality and Conferences.

WORKING GROUPS

MAC-FI members may establish, in collaboration with the Secretariat, ad-hoc working groups to assist its work and recruit external expertise, as necessary, to inform their advice.

CONFIDENTIALITY

MAC-FI members will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement. The Confidentiality Agreement prohibits the disclosure of any confidential or protected information received through member participation on MAC-FI. The Confidentiality Agreement applies to information received in writing or orally, including through email correspondence, telephone calls and print materials, as well as during presentations and discussions at meetings.

MAC-FI members must not discuss or divulge information obtained as a result of their participation as a member of MAC-FI, including advice provided by MAC-FI to the Minister, except as permitted by the terms of the Confidentiality Agreement.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A MAC-FI member is in conflict of interest when private interests conflict with public duties as a member or if the member or the member’s immediate family (e.g., those living with a MAC-FI
member and/or those considered dependants) could personally benefit from advice provided by MAC-FI.

Where there is any doubt as to whether a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest exists or whether any particular action is likely to bring into question the integrity of MAC-FI or its members, members shall raise the matter with the co-Chairs and Secretariat. Disclosure should be made at the earliest possible time, and in any event, prior to any discussion and decision-making on the subject matter. Disclosure should be noted in the record of any meeting in which the disclosure is made or measures are taken.

MAC-FI members are required to complete a Declaration of Affiliations and Interests (DAI) Form before commencing membership on the Council. Members must disclose in the DAI form any circumstances that may place, or be seen to place, the member in a real, apparent or potential conflict of interest. Interests that require declaration include significant financial, business and professional interests. For further details, members may refer to the Affiliations and Interests Checklist (see Appendix A) to complete this form. It is incumbent upon all members to update their DAI form in writing if their personal situation changes. In keeping with the Privacy Act, the personal information in completed DAI forms is protected, and will be treated as confidential information and kept on file by the Agency.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

To resolve any current and/or anticipated disputes, MAC-FI members are expected to conduct open and forthright examination of all issues. When considering conflicts among competing interests, members are expected to act in the greater interest of key Canadian populations vulnerable to and living with HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C.

MEDIA INTERACTION

All media requests related to MAC-FI discussions or activities shall be directed to the Secretariat and will be coordinated by Portfolio Communications. When MAC-FI members are approached by the media to discuss topics being considered by MAC-FI, members may respond to these topics only in their professional capacity. MAC-FI members must avoid expressing any opinions on behalf of MAC-FI or providing information that would be considered confidential pursuant to the confidentiality clause as noted above.