

# **AIDS Community Care Montreal (ACCM)**

## **Strategic Plan**

### **September 2008**

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## **PREAMBLE**

AIDS Community Care Montreal (ACCM) is an AIDS service organization (ASO) in Montreal that was founded in 1987 to respond to the needs of people living with HIV, and in particular the English-speaking community. A volunteer-based community organization, it has grown into a multi-service agency that now also includes a significant mandate in education and prevention. It is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors which delegates the operations of the organization to an Executive Director who manages a team of employees who work in Support, Education and Prevention, Volunteers and Fundraising.

ACCM's last strategic planning took place in 2004 where a final document called "Strategic Plan Summary" was approved by the Board of Directors on October 19, 2004.

Upon consultations between ACCM's Board of Directors and Staff it was agreed that it was important to develop a new Strategic Plan. The reasons for this were:

- The changing landscape of ASOs in Montreal indicated that we needed to look at our vision and mission
- The needs of people with HIV have changed in the last 4 years because more of them are living longer and facing different challenges today.
- The demands of funders have changed (government and other) and these demands need to at least be considered in developing our strategic directions.

## **Executive Summary**

In order to effectively conduct its strategic planning, a Strategic Planning Committee was struck. This committee, which was comprised primarily of the Board's Programs and Services Committee, also included a number of other individuals within the organization. A joint board and staff meeting were held to determine the commitment of the organization to perform the exercise. A process was developed and agreed upon. Research was done in the following areas:

- HIV/AIDS landscape in Montreal from an organizational aspect
- Criminalization of HIV
- Funding Issues/Political Climate
- ACCM Internal Assessment
- Environmental Scan

In addition internet surveys were conducted using SurveyMonkey.com targeting the following audiences:

- Support Service clients
- Volunteers
- Education and Prevention

Focus groups were conducted with Support Service clients using the Drop in Resource Centre as well as with ACCM personnel.

During the process feedback was requested from all members of the Board of Directors and staff.

## **Core Objectives**

The core objectives to be reached are intricately related to the Vision and Mission of ACCM. The primary areas of the organization's focus are:

1. Care, Treatment and Support
2. Education and Prevention

Other areas which are of great importance are volunteerism, fundraising and promotion of the organization. These three areas however are secondary to the main focus of the other two objectives, and are means by which "Care, Treatment and Support" and "Education and Prevention" can be realized to their fullest potential. Without them it would be difficult, if not impossible to do.

## **Vision**

ACCM envisions a society free from the stigma of HIV/AIDS. We are committed to building a community where all people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS receive the support they need. We are dedicated to empowering individuals to make informed decisions related to their health.

## **Mission**

ACCM is a volunteer-based community organization working to enhance the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS, to prevent HIV transmission, and to promote community awareness and action.

We promote the inclusion of diverse populations while working to ensure that ACCM's cultural roots remain an integral part of what we are. We recognize these roots by ensuring access to all of our programs, services and activities in English while increasing access in French.

We are determined to:

- advocate for the human rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, including the right to receive the best quality support, care and treatment;
- support the Greater Involvement of People living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA) in all levels of the organization, recognizing their abilities and willingness;
- promote and support actions from within and outside the community to overcome stigma and discrimination;
- create a safe and welcoming environment with an emphasis on mutual respect and trust;
- view health as more than the absence of illness and strive to promote a holistic approach to well-being;
- value the diversity of those we bring together and learn from each other's experiences by sharing skills and talents;
- advance the principles of harm reduction respecting individual freedoms and responsibility;
- be accountable and transparent to our stakeholders;
- offer volunteers the necessary training and support to keep them central to our work;
- pursue excellence in all that we do, be innovative in our work and be responsive to the changing needs of our community.

To achieve our mission we promote active partnerships between people living with HIV/AIDS and other individuals and organisations in the community.

We are committed to working with empathy and passion to promote a human response to HIV/AIDS.

## Strategic Directions

ACCM is committed to pursuing the following directions in the course of the next five years:

### **1. Promote the empowerment of PHAs through making PHA involvement and participation central to our programs and services.**

- Break isolation through cultivating supportive personal and professional networks among PHAs and other target populations.
- Use social, educational, and recreational activities as a means of increasing PHA involvement and decreasing isolation.
- Encourage and support PHA initiatives in areas of peer support, prevention, social activities and advocacy.
- Ensure that ACCM services meet the needs of our diverse membership.

Mobilization is the best way to build the power and confidence of our community.

### **2. Practice a human rights approach that integrates the philosophies of health promotion and harm reduction.**

- Increase our advocacy role by targeting the trivialization, criminalization, stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and their negative impacts on PHAs.
- Adopt a holistic health approach to prevention and care that responds to the changing needs of PHAs by addressing other relevant health concerns including, but not limited to, aging, other sexually transmitted infections and HIV-HCV co-infection.
- Support a wellness approach that includes complementary, alternative and allopathic philosophies.
- Respect the right and the ability of our members to make health choices that are appropriate for their lives by providing information and support in a non-judgmental manner.

Our human rights philosophy guides us to provide relevant services and support while maintaining the integrity of the communities within which we work and respecting the diversity of individual and collective experiences of HIV.

### **3. Expand our treatment information services to respond to the evolving needs of our target populations.**

- Research current and emerging treatments and ensure that this information is available to our membership.
- Establish partnerships to provide vehicles through which expertise can be shared with our community.
- Address the changing information needs of PHAs with respect to treatment and health issues.

ACCM recognizes the importance of providing up-to-date, accurate treatment information to ensure that PHAs are equipped to make informed treatment choices.

#### **4. Maintain our capacity to offer our programs and activities in English, while developing our ability to do so in French.**

- Recognize the changing linguistic realities of our target populations, including the importance of bilingual interpersonal relationships.
- Pursue partnerships with organizations working primarily in French so as not to duplicate services.
- Provide needed services in both languages where appropriate.

We hope that by expanding our services in French, while maintaining English as our main language of function and operation, we will establish ourselves as a more inclusive organization.

#### **5. Explore creative use of technology to enhance our support and prevention activities.**

- Employ tools such as our website and other internet-based applications to improve communication between ACCM and our target populations.
- Facilitate the participation of our members and target populations, including providing access to technologies where possible.
- Offer discreet and accessible gateways to the organization through technology.

Creative use of technology can be a cost-effective method for ACCM to extend our reach and impact.

#### **6. Broaden and strengthen our volunteer base.**

- Develop our volunteer base to reflect and include the communities with which we work.
- Invest in personal and professional development for volunteers in order to create lasting commitment to the organization and ensure a consistency in programs.
- Respect the abilities of volunteers by encouraging volunteer-led initiatives.
- Establish a community of volunteers who support and mentor one another through knowledge transfer and experience sharing.

Fostering a positive and rewarding volunteer experience is an integral part of the foundation of the organization.

#### **7. Develop a fundraising strategy that ensures flexibility in program development and service delivery.**

- Develop and diversify the capacities of our fundraising team.
- Use fundraising initiatives to elevate ACCM's visibility and solidify our funding base.
- Secure adequate resources to ensure improved staff development, remuneration and benefits that would reduce employee turnover and improve morale.

A stable, diversified funding base and a strong fundraising strategy will enable us to ensure the continuity of existing services while remaining free to identify and prioritize the needs of our community.

## TARGET POPULATIONS

ACCM will focus its efforts on particular populations in order to have a greater impact. These populations are chosen taking into consideration the epidemiology of HIV/AIDS in our community, our own expertise and the work being done by other organizations in our movement. We are committed to working actively with our partner organizations to share resources and build capacity in order to ensure that the needs of the community are met in the most effective way possible.

We express our target populations with respect to our core areas of operation, Care, Treatment & Support and Education and Prevention. It follows that they also apply to the vital activities of Volunteerism, Fundraising and Promotion that operate to support our core areas of operation. The categories of population as expressed do include some overlapping.

### Care, Treatment & Support

- Adults in Poverty
- Gay/MSM
- Newly Diagnosed/Having challenges dealing with HIV
- Women
- Working PHAs

### Education & Prevention

- Gay/MSM
- People living with HIV
- Queer Youth
- Women
- Youth at Risk

We recognize that there can be evolution in any or all of the factors upon which we have based our decisions with respect to target populations, and we maintain the flexibility to adjust our focus in this respect in the future.

*Adopted by the Board of Directors  
20 September 2008*

## **APPENDICES**

1. ACCM 2008 strategic planning process
2. Compilation of Research Documents, including Environmental Scan
3. Snapshot of Epidemiology