



AIDS Calgary Introduces *Shift* – a Program to Help Sex Trade Workers Reduce Harm and Improve Quality of Life

Calgary, Alberta –AIDS Calgary is pleased to announce the launch of *Shift* – a new program that will utilize a harm reduction and rights based approach to work with adults in the sex trade to assist in improving their quality of life and helping them reach individualized goals.

“We adopted the program because we saw a need that was going unmet, for which we were the best choice to meet that need,” says Susan Cress, executive director of AIDS Calgary. “AIDS Calgary has a long and successful history of providing services to individuals involved in the sex trade and *Shift* will allow us to broaden our services to these individuals. It is a natural evolution of delivering harm reduction services to one of Calgary’s most vulnerable communities,” says Cress.

Shift, formally known as Stepping Out, is a program that provided support services and career development programming to women involved in the sex trade. *Shift* will continue to assist those who want to exit the sex trade through accessing needed supports and delivering employment training, however, the program will be expanded to include support services for men, women and transgendered/transsexual people, and will also assist those who do not want to exit the sex trade.

The program has three main intentions:

Create safer working conditions by:

- Educating about harm reduction, human and legal rights in relation to the sex trade;
- Providing services and resources to improve quality of life for people involved in the trade;
- Presentations and education to community members, partners and allies;
- Providing outreach to indoor and outdoor sex trade workers.

Provide skills training/education opportunities by:

- Partnering with and referring people to educational and skill development programs.

Provide prevention and advocacy by:

- Providing legal assistance, court accompaniment;
- Provide prevention tools i.e. safer sex supplies;
- Working on key advocacy issues related to sex work.

We will be holding a press conference on July 10, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Local media is invited to attend. Please RSVP to Chris Huestis at chuestis@aidscalgary.org, or call (403) 508-2500. The press conference will be held at AIDS Calgary’s offices, located at 200, 1509 Centre Street South.

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AIDS Calgary is a local not-for-profit AIDS service organization that offers support services to individuals who are at-risk for, infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and provides prevention and education throughout the Calgary region. For more information, please contact AIDS Calgary at (403) 508-2500 or online at www.aidscalgary.org.

For more information, please contact:

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