



HIV Touches All Our Lives

HIV/AIDS touches the lives of women.

Only recently have health care providers and the public begun to understand that HIV/AIDS is a woman's illness. The slowness with which HIV/AIDS has been recognized as a woman's health concern has resulted in a lack of programs and services targeted to the needs of women. As women we are entitled to healthcare, community programs and services that are designed to meet our specific needs.

This handbook was written to provide HIV positive women with information and resources. It was written so women in the Calgary region could be united in a common quest for quality services that meet individual needs. This handbook provides information on the programs and services that are available as of June 1997, as well as including a resource list of newsletters and phone numbers.

The information for this handbook was collected by surveying HIV positive women in Calgary, and by reviewing the programs and services provided to HIV positive women in other Canadian cities. The survey covered a broad range of personal, social and medical issues. This handbook includes the most common areas shared by the women who responded to the survey.

HIV positive women are extremely diverse, often sharing only a positive diagnosis. Relationships, children and economic needs may all differ, but there are a few common elements that unite the women who responded to the survey. Some of these subjects are Health Care, Home Support, Transportation, Legal Resources and Social Support.

This handbook attempts to provide women with accurate and useful information. We hope that future editions of the handbook will include a greater array of services and resources.

Health Care:

Women have a right to quality health care provided by caring, informed medical practitioners. Women who are HIV positive have specific health issues. These issues need to be addressed by doctors who are willing to work with a patient to provide expert medical care.

A woman's health goes beyond her body and includes her psychological (mental) health. The opportunity to talk to a qualified, affordable and understanding professional is an important part of maintaining a healthy life.

Physical Health:

Southern Alberta Clinic (SAC)

Comprehensive health care to HIV positive individuals including medical services, nutritional advice and a social worker who can help with community referrals. SAC is located at 213, 906 - 8 Avenue, SW. For information call 234-2399.

SAC does not provide health care for non-HIV related illnesses. They maintain an up-to-date listing of Calgary doctors that are seeing HIV positive patients.

Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Clinic

Free testing for all sexually transmitted diseases. Alberta Health Care is not required. Women can see doctors at the STD clinic in relation to all STD's including HIV. Located at 107, 309 - 2nd Avenue, SW. For more information call 297-6562.



Calgary Urban Projects Society (CUPS)

Services to HIV positive women including a free walk-in-health clinic, counseling, advocacy, support, a needle exchange and referrals. Alberta Health Care is not required. For more information visit CUPS at 128 - 7 Avenue SE or call 221-8780.

Foothills Hospital Dental Clinic

Dental care for people with medical illnesses including HIV/AIDS. Fee for service; social services may cover cost. For more information or to book an appointment call 670-2401.

Mental Health:

Calgary Counseling Centre (formerly Pastoral Institute)

Individual, couples and family counseling. Sliding fee scale. Located at 200, 940 - 6 Avenue SW. For more information call 265-4980.

Provincial Mental Health Advisory Board (formerly Alberta Mental Health)

Provides help, at no charge, to Albertans of all ages. Intake worker does an assessment. Services include counseling or other treatments as required on an individual, family or group basis. For more information call 297-7196 (Northeast clinic), 297-7345 (Northwest clinic) or 297-7311 (downtown).

Distress Centre/Drug Centre

24-hour crisis line 266-1605. Free professional counseling - short-term crisis counseling, and addiction counseling can be accessed by calling the crisis line or through an intake worker at 266-1605 or 266-1601.

Eastside and Westside Family Centres

Free walk-in counseling session. Brief low cost counseling services. Referrals and connections to other services. 24-hour mobile crisis service. 24-hour telephone support at 299-9699 or 1-800-563-6106. Eastside Family Centre is located at Northgate Village Mall 255, 495 - 36 Street NE or call 299-9696. Westside Family Centre is located at 6501 Bowness Rd. NW. For more information call 288-3313.

Home Support/Care:

As women we may be more comfortable looking after the needs of others rather than focusing on our own health. We often assume the role of caretaker, looking after children, family and friends. At times in our life we may need assistance. Those who live independently may need help with housework, childcare or the assistance of nursing staff. Women who currently receive part-time help may eventually need more long-term care.

Home Care - Community Health Resources:

Range of services including nursing services, homemaking and personal care. Assesses health need for service. All professional services are covered by Alberta Health Care. For more information contact: Calgary Health Services, Home Care Division 228-7480.

Para-Med Health Services

Care for individuals with HIV/AIDS including personal care, homemaking, companionship and complex nursing visits. For more detailed information call 229-2888 (24 hrs).



Calgary Home Support Services LTD

Personal care (bathing, hair, etc.) help managing housework, as well as childcare. Services can be purchased through Home Support, or an assessment of needs, which may cover costs, can be done through Home Care, Social Services, or Insurance companies. For more information call 232-8770.

Long Term Care:

The Salvation Army Agape Manor Hospice

Residential hospice for the terminally ill. Consists of 13 beds, 4 for pre-hospice and 9 beds for hospice. Fee for those who can afford it. For more information call 282-6588.

Sharp Foundation - Beswick House

24-hour supportive community home for people living with HIV/AIDS in need of palliative care. Provides affordable housing and care to people living with HIV/AIDS. There is a fee for service. For more information call 248-1941 or 245-19094.

Legal Resources:

The management of legal affairs can be time consuming and overwhelming. At times seeking legal advice can be expensive and intimidating. Child support, guardianship and wills are legal challenges many women face. Qualified legal support is essential to successfully achieving the solutions of legal concerns and problems.

The Elizabeth Fry Society

Works with HIV positive women who are incarcerated as well as those who are reintegrating into the community. Provides support to women living with HIV and offers them information about, and referrals to, appropriate organizations and agencies. Located at 204, 1009 - 7 Avenue SW. For more information call 294-0737.

Lawyer Referral

Recorded information on 140 legal topics. Each recording ends with the names of three lawyers; they will provide information on their hourly rate. To listen to recordings call 228-1722.

Legal Aid

Provides a lawyer for court appearances under certain circumstances. Each case and the cost are decided on an individual basis. For more information call 297-2260.

Calgary Legal Guidance

Legal advice and assistance to low income Calgarians that do not qualify for Legal Aid. Also offers special programs for social benefit recipients and victims of domestic assault. For more information call 234-9266.

YMCA Women's Resource Centre

Free 30-minute consultations. Consultations are held every Tuesday evening. Appointments are required for the consultations. For more information call 283-5994.

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

Free legal advice and counseling services to immigrant women. For more information call 263-4414.



Resource List:

Newsletters

Stronger Together (A Bulletin About Positive Change). Published by the Canadian AIDS Society. Copies are available in the AIDS Calgary library.

WORLD (Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Disease). Copies are available by writing to P.O. Box 11535 Oakland, CA 94611 or by calling (501) 658-6930. Copies can be obtained for free.

Information Lines

Treatment

CATIE: Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange 1-800-263-1638.

Support

AIDS Network of Edmonton Society: can put positive women in touch with other positive women living in Alberta. Call collect (403) 488-5742.

Central Alberta Aids Network (CAAN). Provides support, counseling and referrals. Can put positive women in touch with Peer Support. For more information call collect (403) 346-8858.

Advocacy

Canadian AIDS Society CAS 1-800-884-1058 or (613) 230-3580.

More information on treatment, support and advocacy is available through AIDS Calgary. For a full listing of agencies and services in Calgary and surrounding area see the "Calgary Street Survival Guide".

This information belongs to you. You have the power to influence community agencies in the development of services and programs by telling them what you want.

Your involvement can be a phone call, a letter, a visit to AIDS Calgary, or becoming involved in the Women and HIV Cluster. These programs and services are yours. Tell community agencies what they can do for you.

The intent of the Calgary Coalition on HIV/AIDS (CCHA), Women and HIV Cluster is to increase accessibility to community services and agencies for HIV positive women as well as to increase community awareness of issues important to HIV positive women.

For more information or to become involved call AIDS Calgary and ask to speak to a member of the Women and HIV Cluster at 508-2500.

For more information on the CCHA and how you can participate please contact:

AIDS Calgary 508-2500

Canadian Red Cross Society 541-4400