



REPORT 2015

**Committee for
Accessible
AIDS
Treatment**

About CAAT

Mission

The Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment (CAAT) is a coalition of affected individuals and organizations from the legal, health, settlement, social service, and HIV/AIDS sectors committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of people living with HIV (PHAs) who are facing access barriers related to their precarious status in Canada.

Brief History

Formed in 1999 to improve treatment and service access for marginalized PHAs, CAAT has been at the forefront of education, research, service coordination, and advocacy on issues related to HIV, immigration and access. In 2001, CAAT undertook a groundbreaking collaborative community based action research project: *Improving treatment access for PHAs who are immigrants, refugees and non-status (IRN)*. The study documented the challenges faced by vulnerable PHA groups and engaged stakeholders from various sectors to develop a joint action plan to address these barriers. As a result of the study, several innovative initiatives were developed that continue to this day.

Vision

Our vision is a healthy urban community in which all individuals living with HIV/AIDS have the information and tools they need to access health, social and legal services that are welcoming, inclusive, and respectful regardless of their immigration status.

Guiding Principles

The highest value is put on the voices and

leadership of people living with HIV/AIDS in our work, and the view that health is a holistic and inclusive of the physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual aspects of life.

Equity and Social Justice

Equity and social justice: We value human rights based approach that respects individual rights for access to treatment and health care including access to sexual and reproductive health services regardless of HIV and immigration status, diversity and demonstrate respect for the voices of all stakeholders. We are committed to social justice for all. CAAT works from an anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-homophobia/transphobia and anti-sexism framework aimed at reducing discrimination, stigma, and prejudice based on culture, ethnicity, religion, age, ability, sexual orientation and above all, HIV status.

Community Ownership / Responsiveness

Community ownership/responsiveness: We place great value on community and evidence-based advocacy and solutions as a means to effect systemic and policy change. At CAAT, we also emphasize community ownership, transparency, accountability, and meaningful collaboration with the communities we serve.

CAAT's key program areas include:

1. Empowerment Education and Outreach
2. Community Development
3. Service and Volunteer Coordination
4. Research & Evidence-Based Advocacy

Co-Chair & Director Report



Valérie Pierre-Pierre
CAAT Co-Chair



Y.Y. Brandon Chen
CAAT Co-Chair



Maureen Owino
Director

Having marked the fifteenth anniversary of CAAT just last year, we are delighted to celebrate another milestone this year with the launch of the report for the Community Champions HIV/AIDS Advocates Mobilization Project (CHAMP). Funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, CHAMP has been one of CAAT's flagship projects in recent years. The ground-breaking study brought together both PHA and non-PHA community leaders from diverse backgrounds to collectively confront HIV stigma. We are proud of the fact that the stigma-reduction interventions successfully piloted in CHAMP have already been adopted by other researchers and organizations in the HIV/AIDS sector and beyond.

The success of CHAMP speaks to the expertise that CAAT has developed over the years in community-based research. Since the first study we conducted in 2001, CAAT has established a track record of relying on innovative research to generate knowledge and inspire collective actions. By meaningfully engaging PHAs in all aspects of research and working collaboratively across service sectors,

CAAT has been in the forefront of realizing GIPA/MIPA principles and fostering community ownership. Our recent completion of Phase 1 of the Supporting the Supporters Resilience Promotion Intervention Study in collaboration with the ABRPO is another testament to this fact. Certainly, we owe our accomplishments to everyone who has partaken in our research, whether as funders, study participants, advisory committee members, or a part of the investigation teams. We thank you for your enthusiasm, dedication, and hard work! We look forward to continuing our partnerships in building a strong evidence base for the improvement of PHAs' health and wellbeing.

In addition to research, CAAT has enjoyed a productive year in other program areas as well. We have continued to expand on our provincial capacity building mandate by building new partnerships and strengthening the existing ones across Ontario. For example, we have conducted HIV and Immigration Service Access training workshops for service providers and immigrants, refugees and non-status people living with HIV in different parts of the province. This includes Ottawa, Sudbury,



Grimsby, Durham region among others. We also continue to engage enthusiastically with our legal partners in this field of HIV and the law – specifically the HIV/AIDS Legal Clinic of Ontario and the law offices of Jordan Battista.

As in years past, CAAT has remained committed to community engagement and mentorship in 2015. We understand that collective empowerment is essential to overcoming the power imbalance that faces historically marginalized groups. Our Legacy Project held an orientation session in March where mentors and mentees were paired to explore different life goals. Preliminary feedback from participants has been extremely positive. Building on this success, the Legacy Project launched a new and exciting group mentoring initiative this year: The Acceptance Commitment to Empowerment (ACE) program. This initiative adapts the interventions piloted in CHAMP, and it aims to support peers experiencing mental health and addiction/substance use issues to explore their inner strengths by way of psychological empowerment.

Organizational planning and strategic development were other highlights of CAAT in 2015. We organized two retreats in the spring: one for staff members and the CAAT Steering Committee, and another for peer associates/peer facilitators. Through dialogue and experiential learning the retreats helped clarify the strategic directions of CAAT's work for the next 3 – 5 years. They also helped CAAT to identify ways to better align our programs with the latest provincial HIV/AIDS Strategy.

Before closing, we wish to congratulate Marvelous Muchenje-Marisa and Dr. Josephine Wong for their respective Honour Roll Awards from the Ontario AIDS Network, which were handed out this November. Both Marvelous and Josephine have been long-term supporters of CAAT, and have made important contributions to CAAT's work. We are indebted to them for their service, and we take pride in being able to consider them members of the CAAT family.

We would also like to extend our warmest congratulations to the recipient of the 2015 Alan Li Social Justice Capacity Building Award. As you may recall, CAAT launched this award last year as a way to acknowledge our tireless PHA volunteers and to showcase the incredible personal growth that they continue to make. The Award recognizes a person living with HIV from racialized newcomer communities who embodies the values of courage, compassion, perseverance, and commitment to social justice.

We are blessed to be working alongside these and many more extraordinary people here at CAAT. With another successful year coming to a close, we look to the upcoming year with great excitement about what we can achieve together.

Valérie Pierre-Pierre, Co-Chair
Y.Y. Brandon Chen, Co-Chair
Maureen Owino, Director

CAAT Program Reports

1. Community-Engaged Research & Evidence-Based Advocacy

Alan Li, Chair, CAAT Research Committee

Henry Luyombya, CHAMP Research Project Coordinator

Community HIV Championship: CHAMP

Our signature CIHR-funded study, **Community Champions HIV/AIDS Advocates Mobilization Project (CHAMP)**, completed its data analysis in 2014 and is now in the active phase of knowledge translation. CHAMP engaged both HIV positive and HIV negative participants from Asian, African Caribbean and Latino communities to evaluate the effectiveness of two interventions (Acceptance Commitment Training & Social Justice Capacity Building) in reducing HIV stigma and mobilizing community stakeholders in taking leadership actions in HIV work.

Our data demonstrated that the CHAMP interventions were effective in reducing HIV stigma amongst all participants and in mobilizing community engagement in HIV/AIDS issues. Participants demonstrated HIV championship activities ranging from care and support for PHAs, HIV prevention, anti-stigma education and advocacy, and connecting HIV issues to broader health promotion and social justice initiatives. Four knowledge translation workgroups were developed by the CHAMP participants themselves to continue the championship through: (1) development of audio-visual educational materials to reduce HIV stigma; (2) health promotion activities to improve quality of lives of PHAs; (3) connecting peer support and social activities with broader

social justice agencies and networks; and (4) media and advocacy skill building to advance social justice. In addition, the CHAMP interventions have been adapted by CAAT programs and external partners for further research and program development to address stigma in mental health and addiction amongst various populations. The research team is also working with our collaborative partners to explore resources to scale up and replicate our interventions in diverse community settings.

Supporting the Supporters (STS) Resilience Promotion Intervention Study:

The STS resilience promotion intervention study was developed in response to the needs identified through our pilot study *When PHAs Become Service Providers (2013)* and the *Supporting the Supporters National Think Tank (2014)* which brought into focus the multiple challenges and new access barriers faced by PHAs as they take on service provision roles in the HIV and allied sectors. The STS study, funded by the Ontario HIV Treatment Network, pilots and evaluates the effectiveness of a resilience promoting intervention based on GIPA/MIPA principles, resilience theories and capacity building programming experience from CAAT and the AIDS Bereavement and Resiliency Program of Ontario (ABRPO). The study will evaluate the effectiveness of this integrated intervention

in supporting PHA service providers in resilience responses to support self care, manage work related stressors, address changes in boundaries and peer expectations, and contribute to individual and collective resilience. We have completed Phase One of the study - intervention and data collection. Phase Two will take place in February 2016. We look forward to sharing our findings and follow-up action plans with the communities in the summer of 2016.

Community Research Capacity Building:

In our continuous effort to champion innovative and community responsive research capacity building initiatives, CAAT integrates holistic skill building activities in all our research projects, which include training and mentoring practices for all research team members, staff and peer research associates. In addition, this year we conducted an 8-week Community-Campus CBR Writing Circle, which included 4 academic students and 4 community participants on academic tracks to engage in academic journal writing skills development activities with each participant aiming to complete at least one journal submission at the end of the writing circle.

Advancing health of racialized and newcomer PHAs through networking, collaboration and advocacy:

A core part of CAAT's mission is to advance the health of our affected communities through collective empowerment efforts

that engage and collaborate with diverse partners to build a more compassionate and caring society for all. In addition to our many research project partners, we also actively collaborate with and support the work of the following local, provincial, national and global networks through a variety of initiatives:

- **Newcomer Resource Development:** To develop and Promote resource guide for newcomers to Ontario In collaboration with CAAT, GMSH and WHAI.
- **OHTN ACB chair:** Nomination Committee member for the OHTN Chair in HIV Program Science for African, Caribbean and Black Communities
- **CTAC:** Newcomers and Treatment Access Working Group on HIV
- **Collective leadership in practice project (Health Nexus and OPHA):** Partnership project to strengthen collective and equitable leadership in the non-profit sector specifically in the context of partnerships and networks.

Other research that CAAT plays leadership and/or collaborative roles include:

- **Project PEER (PHAs Engaged in Employment Roles):** Uncovering the impact of GIPA/MIPA and the Wise Practices of formal and informal peer support, CIHR-REACH CBR Collaborative.
- **Understanding HIV Infection Post Migration amongst ACB Populations in Ontario,** University of Toronto

- **PREPARATORY 5 Study: Maximizing CBO's role in PrEP**, St. Michael's Hospital.
- **Exploring the Acceptability and Feasibility of PrEP for African and Caribbean Populations' Study**, St. Michael's Hospital.
- **AMP2R**: Exploring pathways and resiliency strategies to address life challenges amongst Asian MSMs, Asian Community AIDS Services.
- **WeSpeak: Straight Black Men Building Resilience to HIV in Ontario**, Ryerson University, AIDS Committee of Toronto, University of Windsor, University of Ottawa, and Western University.
- **The Canadian HIV Stigma Index Project**; (Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, CIHR-REACH CBR Collaborative).
- **YEPStudy: Youth Engagement to Prevent HIV/STI & Promote Sexual Health Study**, Ryerson University.
- **Strength In Unity (SIU) Project: A National Study to Reduce Mental Health Stigma Amongst Asian Men**, Ryerson University, University of Calgary, Simon Fraser University, and University of Toronto.
- **HIV Disclosure Research**: Identifying Issues Impacting Organizational Integration of Disclosure Intervention, Women's Health in Women's Hands.
- **Knowledge synthesis**: "Systematic review of perinatal HIV transmission from exclusive breastfeeding for over one month when the mother has full viral suppression with antiretroviral therapy"; Women's College Hospital.



CAAT team at CAHR Conference.

2. Community Development, Training & Capacity Building

Raj Jagwani, *Capacity Building Coordinator*

HIV & Immigration Service Access Training

CAAT's HIV& Immigration Service Access Training program engages PHAs and service providers to enhance their awareness of legal, social, health and service access issues affecting newcomers living with HIV/AIDS. Since 2013, with additional funding support from the Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, AIDS Bureau, CAAT has taken on the expanded role in facilitating capacity building on HIV and immigration related issues for ASOs across Ontario that serve newcomer PHAs. This initiative has provided us with an opportunity to strengthen existing partnerships and build new coalitions.

2015 Program Highlights:

- *Provincial Advisory Committee:* The first face to face meeting for advisory committee members was held in July 2015 in Toronto. Participants came from across the province to inform and guide the development, implementation and evaluation process of HIV and immigration training program.
- *Working Group:* A working group consisting of immigration lawyers successfully modified the training programs to include emerging trends in immigration, changes in immigration laws and policies, as well as needs of participants based on feedback from previous trainings.

- *HIV Service Access Training:* Two-day training was held in Toronto and attended by 24 participants.
- *Province-Wide Training:* Facilitated 4 workshops for service providers across Ontario in partnership with HALCO at: AIDS Committee of Durham, Positive Living Niagara & The AIDS Network Hamilton, AIDS Committee of Ottawa and 2015 North-eastern Ontario HIV/AIDS Opening Doors Conference in Sudbury, Ontario.

Ethno-racial Treatment Support Network (ETSN)

ETSN integrates GIPA/MIPA and shared leadership in its treatment literacy and peer counseling skill development training program to facilitate collective empowerment and community succession. ETSN provides training in three levels:

- Level 1: "Helping Ourselves" focuses on treatment literacy and communication skills with health care providers;
- Level 2: "Helping Each Other" focuses on peer counseling support skills; and,
- Level 3: Facilitators training & mentored practices for peer graduates taking on facilitator roles.



ETSN training graduation.

2015 Program Highlights:

- *Peer Facilitators Training:* A training session was held for nine peer graduates and new peer facilitators. Peer graduate facilitators were paired with new peer facilitators to plan and facilitate the next session of Level 1 Training.
- *ETSN Level 1 Training – Helping Ourselves:* Nine peers successfully completed one series of training where they learned skills and information on health care.
- *ETSN Knowledge Sharing:* CAAT’s Capacity Building Coordinator presented the “ETSN Peer-based Model” at a panel during the CATIE Forum 2015. The breakout session Raj presented at was titled ‘Models of Culturally Competent HIV and HCV Services’. It was well received with interest from forum attendees.
- *Peer Retreat:* A weekend retreat was held in May where 22 ETSN peer graduates

participated in discussion to identify learning and capacity building needs and priorities of CAAT/ETSN peers.

- *ETSN Alumni Social:* An extremely successful all day summer picnic / BBQ was held in Ash bridges Bay Park on Lake Ontario in Toronto for all levels of ETSN peer graduates and their loved ones. Over 40 people networked, socialised and got to know one another in a fun and relaxed setting.



CBR Writing Circle mentors and participants

3. Empowerment, Education & Outreach

PHA Mentorship: The Legacy 2 Project: “Walk with Us”

Alessandro Ciro Bisignano, *Project Coordinator*

The Legacy Project is a PHA Mentorship program, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, developed and implemented by CAAT in partnership with ABRPO, ACCHO, ETSN, OHTN, PHAN, and PWA. The goal of Legacy Phase 2 is to engage diverse PHA and community partners in individual and group mentoring initiatives to promote capacity building, professional and civic engagement, reduced social isolation and HIV stigma, improve access to services and determinants of health.

2015 Legacy 2 Highlights:

The Legacy 2 Project enjoyed a successful year in 2015. Here are some of our notable achievements:

- All participants of the PHA Worker Training graduated and a graduation ceremony was held.
- We have continued to build a partnership with the PHA mentorship program at PHAN.
- Legacy Orientation session for new mentor and mentees that was successful in bringing the intergenerational mentorship to the forefront of the legacy project having majority of the mentees number of young adult PHAs participating this year.



CHAMP participants at summer barbecue

- In partnership with WHIWH we conducted a focus group for young adults living with HIV/AIDS to test the effectiveness of the disclosure model.
- Group mentoring initiatives: In 2015 CAAT together with Ryerson University co-sponsored a CBR critical writing circle learning series attended by 4 of CAAT’s peer participants interested in developing skills in research writing.
- Planning of the Acceptance and Commitment to Empowerment (ACE) group mentoring initiative is in its final stages. It aims at supporting peers on issues related to mental health and addiction using a CAAT-CHAMP integrated intervention informed by the tested Acceptance Commitment Training and Social Justice Capacity Building.

CAAT Event Highlights



November 2014

- Capacity Building Training for peers on PrEP
- CAAT is inducted into the OAN Honour Roll for advancing Social Justice in HIV/AIDS
- ETSN Level 1 series for Youths

December 2014

- HIV & Immigration informational session for staff at the Regional HIV/ AIDS Connection, London, Ontario

January 2015:

- CAAT was a silver sponsor for the One Love Gala

February 2015

- ETSN Level 1 peer facilitators training

March 2015

- ETSN Level 1 Training: Helping Others
- HIV & Immigration Service Access Training in Toronto
- Legacy orientation session

April 2015

- CAAT Staff and Steering Committee Retreat

May 2015

- ETSN Peer and Staff Retreat
- Presentation at the closing plenary at the 2014 CAHR conference, Toronto

June 2015

- HIV & Immigration Service Access Training in Durham Region
- CHAMP Study Reconnection Event "Champions Across Boundaries: Moving Forward"

July 2015

- Provincial Capacity Building Advisory Committee members 1st meeting and training in Toronto
- Immigration changes presentation at APAA

August 2015

- ETSN Networking and Social Event (Picnic/ BBQ)

September 2015

- HIV & Immigration presentation at North Easter Ontario Opening Doors Conference, Sudbury, Ontario
- PHA Worker Training Graduation

October 2015

- HIV & Immigration Service Access Training in Grimsby, ON in partnership with Positive Living Niagara and The AIDS Network in Hamilton
- Panel presentation at CATIE forum on ETSN as a peer based model on Linking to Care



Raj Jagwani presenting at the CATIE capacity building forum



CAAT receiving OAN Award

- Guest lecture to school of social work, university of Toronto on HIV and Immigration: “Challenges facing IRN-PHAs and innovative Resilience Strategies
- Disclosure model focus group of youth living with HIV/AIDS in partnership with WHIWH
- Presentation at Ryerson University on “Vulnerabilities Affecting Marginalized Population”
- Pre-intervention focus groups for the Supporting The Supporters Resilience Promotion Intervention Study
- Guest lecture on “Critical Community-based Research” for nursing students at York University
- CAAT presentation for City of Toronto HIV 101 Workshop series
- Completion of intervention and Phase 1 data collection of the Supporting the Supporters: Resilience Promotion Intervention Study
- CHAMP KTE Video: “The True Story of Overcoming Stigma” created by CHAMP participants to reduce HIV stigma with technical support from OHTN

November 2015

- HIV & Immigration Service Access Training in Ottawa, ON



CHAMP KTE video shoot

Networking Members & Collaborators

ABRPO – AIDS Bereavement and Resiliency Project of Ontario
ACCCHO – African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario
ACT – AIDS Committee of Toronto
APAA – Africans in Partnership Against AIDS
ASO – AIDS Service Organization
Black-CAP – Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention
CAAT – Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment
CATIE – Canadian Treatment Information Exchange
CHAMP – Community Champions HIV/AIDS Advocates Mobilization Project
CIHR – Canadian Institutes for Health Research
CSSP – Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples
CTAC – Canadian Treatment Action Council
ETSN – Ethno-racial Treatment Support Network
HALCO – HIV/AIDS Legal Clinic of Ontario
IRN-PHAs – Immigrants, Refugees and Non-status people living with HIV/AIDS
LPO – Latino Positivos Ontario
OHTN – Ontario HIV Treatment Network
PHAC – Public Health Agency of Canada
PHAN – Peel HIV/AIDS Network
RPCHC – Regent Park Community Health Centre
TPWA – Toronto People with AIDS Foundation
UWW – Universities Without Walls
WHAI - Women & HIV/AIDS Initiative
WHIWH – Women’s Health in Women’s Hands



CHAMP networking session

Volunteers & Staff

CAAT Steering Committee:

Alan Li
Andrew Miao
Y.Y. Brandon Chen (Co-chair)
Fatima Barry
Guy Mian
James Murray (ex-officio member)
Marisol Desbiens
Marvelous Muchenje-Marisa
Shazia Islam
Suzanne Paddock
Trevor Gray
Valérie Pierre-Pierre (Co-chair)
Vijaya Chikermame (Co-chair)

Immigration Training:

Adrienne Smith
Alan Li
Y.Y. Brandon Chen
John Norquay
Meagan Johnston
Michael Battista

ETSN Advisory Committee:

Andrew Miao
Claudette Samuels
Clorine McNeish-Weir
Derek Yee
Emmanuel Ndyanabo
Gladys Kwaramba
Mary Ndungu
Omer Abdulghani
Rene Lopez
Samuel Lopez
Shazia Islam

ETSN Trainers /

Peer Facilitators (2015):

Alan Li
Alphonso Forbes
Andrew Miao
Claudette Samuels
Dale Maitland
Derek Yee
Emmanuel Ndyanabo
Fatima Barry
Josephine Wong
Keith Wong
Lena Soje
Mary Gikundi'
Paulina Tshuma

Legacy Project Advisory Committee/Volunteers:

Alan Li
Anna Demetrakopoulos
Bridget Young
Christian Hui
Claudette Samuels
Ed Argo
Eric Peters
Keith Wong
Ted Kloosterman

Legacy Program Working Group Volunteers:

Alan Li
Amanuel Tesfamichael
Anna Demetrakopoulos
Claudette Samuels
Clorine McNeish-Weir
Derek Yee
Emmanuel Ndyanabo
Gladys Kwaramba
Henry Luyombya
Jalila Muhammad
Josephine Wong
Kemar Brown
Kimberly Bryce
Lucy Kagotho
Maureen Owino
Rajesh Pisharody
Samuel Lopez

CHAMP Research Team:

Alan Li
Eleanor Maticka-Tyndale
Fanta Ongoiba
Jack Kapac
James Murray
Josephine Wong
Kenneth Fung
Mateusz Zurowski
Omer Abdulghani
Rene Lopez
Richard Utama
Shannon Ryan

Supporting the Supporters Resilience Intervention Research Project Team:

Alan Li
Andrew Miao
Anna Demetrakopoulos
Annette Bailey
Y.Y. Brandon Chen
Josephine Wong
Maureen Owino
Precious Maseko
Yvette Perreault

Staff:

Director
Maureen Owino

Capacity Building Coordinator
Raj Jagwani

Supporting the Supporters Resilience Promotion Research Coordinator
Alessandro Ciro Bisignano

Legacy Project Coordinator
Alessandro Ciro Bisignano

CHAMP Research Coordinator
Henry Luyombya

CAAT Research Associates
Alessandro Ciro Bisignano
Amanuel Tesfamichael
Christian Hui
Dale Maitland
Kenneth Poon
Lucy Kagotho
Desmond Chuang
Rick Julien
Chris Leonard
Judith Odhiambo

Funding Partner Acknowledgement

Operational Funding Partners:

AIDS Bureau, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Public Health Agency of Canada

Project Funding Partners:

Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR)
Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN)

Educational Grants:

Abbott
Bristol-Myers Squibb
Gilead Sciences Canada
Merck
Moss Park Pharmacy
Tibotec
ViiV Health care in partnership with Shire Canada

Special Thanks:

Sponsoring Partners and Trustee Agencies

Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention
Regent Park Community Health Centre



CAAT Staff



CAHR Closing Plenary by CAAT team on using collaborative research



**Committee for
Accessible
AIDS
Treatment**
Toronto, Canada



465 Dundas Street East
Toronto, ON M5A 2B2
416-364-2261 ext 2277

Website: www.hivimmigration.ca

E-mails: coordinator@hivimmigration.ca
maureno@regentparkchc.org



Facebook.com/HIVImmigration



@HIVImmigration

