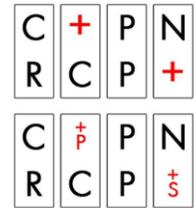


INTERCONNECTED

CANADIAN POSITIVE PEOPLE NETWORK



In this issue	"Spotlight"
A message from the Board of Directors' Co-Chairs	<p>We are Interconnected!</p> <p>On April 1, 2020, we are officially launching: Our new Toll-Free telephone number: 1-800-390-7962 AND Our new email accounts: General mailbox: cppnrcps@cppnrcps.ca Board of Directors: boardconseil@cppnrcps.ca</p> <p>And, we will be ready to launch our new Website in early-April... stay tuned.</p>
A message from the Treasurer	Plus, you will be able to connect with members of our Leadership Team directly
A message from the Executive Director	You'll find these key messages in this inaugural issue
Meet the Leadership Team	<p>"We acknowledge that regaining the trust of all CPPN members is and will be of paramount importance in the coming months."</p> <p>"While our planning and reporting obligations to PHAC were extensive, we were successful in bringing the CPPN "out of default" as of February 10, 2020."</p> <p>"Members of the CPPN's Board of Directors sign a Commitment Charter when they join the Team. As Executive Director, I make the same commitments to the CPPN."</p> <p>"This is not the time for moralizing about lifestyles, about drug use, about sex. Let's just get on with it."</p>
Feature piece: a member's perspective (Bob Leahy on Coronavirus)	To CPPN Members... a request
A closer look at COVID-19	We want Interconnected to recognize and celebrate our cross-country presence as members of Canada's only national, independent network of, by, and for people living with HIV & HIV co-infections. But we need your help. At last count, the CPPN had 206 registered members... impressive, given that we got our start with less than 100!
Coronavirus Conversations in the news	While you are not required to re-register as a CPPN member, given the recent circumstances and subsequent changes, it would be immensely helpful to us if you would re-confirm your membership. We don't want it to be an onerous process for you. At the same time, we hope that you will appreciate how important it is that we have a membership record that is current.
Valuable Resources	
"Snapshots" CPPN (by the numbers) Save the Date(s)	So... if you are already a member, please email us at members.membres@cppnrcps.ca . The subject line should read: Yes, I am and wish to continue to be a member of the CPPN. Then , in the body of your message, please share with us: your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, your birthdate (if you are willing), and the number of years you have been living with HIV. With this important piece of work completed, we will be able to illustrate just how much we are present in Canada in the next issue of Interconnected. Thank you!
Your perspective is important to us. Let us know if you would like to contribute to a future issue of Interconnected. connect@cppnrcps.ca	Publication of Interconnected is made possible through a financial contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada.



A message from the Co-Chairs

Following the last challenging year, the new Board undertook a comprehensive review of what happened (and why). The Board was also required to provide very detailed reports to PHAC in its effort to restore PHAC faith and trust in the CPPN and, ultimately, to restore its funding to March 31, 2022.

The current Board's efforts and achievements are notable. Most importantly, the Board has reaffirmed its commitment to the funders, the project, and to people living with HIV and HCV co-infections across Canada. Several comprehensive reports have been submitted to PHAC, an audit of the CPPN's books was completed, meetings with PHAC officials were held to help re-establish their trust in the CPPN's governance team, and, with the support of PHAC, the Executive Director was reinstated on December 26, 2019. At end of March 2020, the Board is happy to share that indeed our funding was reinstated. Additionally, we have approval of our work plan to March 31, 2022.

The CPPN's Board recognizes that the organization's crisis over the past year has had a significant impact on CPPN members' faith in the organization and served to fuel several members' concerns about the CPPN's credibility and viability as a national, independent network of, by, and for people living with HIV and HIV co-infections from across Canada. At the same time, the challenges experienced over the last several months have provided invaluable learning opportunities for the CPPN's governance team. Most importantly, overcoming and growing from those challenges was (and is) the Board's unyielding priority.

The CPPN is viable; the CPPN is invaluable; and, the CPPN will successfully and credibly realize its rightful and uncompromising role in Canada's national response to HIV and HIV co-infections as Canada's only independent national network of, by, and for people living with HIV and HIV co-infections from across the country.

On behalf of the Board, we acknowledge that regaining the trust of all CPPN members is and will be of paramount importance in coming months. We are committed to you, the CPPN's members, and we are unshakable in our resolve to learn from our past challenges with a view to paving the way to a meaningful collective of people living with HIV and HIV co-infections in Canada. We are grateful for the support we've been afforded by so many of you; we look forward to working in earnest to gain the confidence of all of you.

	
Brittany Cameron	Kathleen Bird

A message from our Treasurer

The CPPN has had a year of uncertainty and fluctuations, financially. The Public Health Agency of Canada suspended our activities and our funding, effective from February 20, 2019. While our planning and reporting obligations to PHAC were extensive, we were successful in bringing the CPPN “out of default” as of February 10, 2020.

Because our suspension was in place for such an extended period, it meant that we had to prepare a budget that was significantly less than what was originally approved since our funding and our activities in this fiscal year were limited to the 4th quarter of 2019/20. We are back on track for our fiscal years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, with no reductions in work planned. This means we can carry out our planned work as the balance of this contribution agreement will be supported financially.

We have a lot to accomplish in a short period of time. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions currently, our planned face-to-face regional meetings’ timelines have been pushed forward. However, we have every confidence that we can carry out these activities as soon as we are able.

We have a solid leadership team, including our newly reinstated Executive Director, backed by knowledgeable and supportive members. This will carry us through this fiscal year and next and put us in a good position to apply for the next round of funding through the Public Health Agency of Canada’s Community Action Fund.

We have struck a Finance Committee for the first time, to oversee our finances. We are still looking for more members to assist with the Finance Committee so if you’re interested, email me (deborah@cppnrcps.ca) or Jeff (jrpotts@cppnrcps.ca). No experience with Finance is necessary but it helps if you can read and understand financial and budgeting reports. We meet once a month for an hour and you’d need to spend about an hour reviewing reports and budgets prior to our meeting.



Deborah Norris

And, a message from our Executive Director

It is my great pleasure to contribute to this inaugural issue of **Interconnected**, and my honour and privilege to do so as the CPPN’s Executive Director. Since my return to this role, I’ve been very busy getting reacquainted with and focused on the CPPN’s operations, its budget and work plan, and on its ongoing/renewed “Establishing Priorities” initiative.

Members of the Board of Directors sign a “Commitment Charter” when they join the Leadership Team. I am thrilled to reaffirm my own commitments to the CPPN and to you. My commitment to:

- Ensure that gender equity, diversity and inclusion, non-discrimination, and solidarity with Indigenous people and communities remain priorities for the CPPN and for the work that I do; and
- Serve in good faith as Executive Director with a duty of care a duty of loyalty a duty of obedience and a duty of decorum.

And, in keeping with the Board’s commitments to the “Twelve Principles of Good Governance”, I also want to reassure you that my work and my contributions will, in earnest, be grounded by focus on:

- Building and sustaining constructive partnerships.
- Being mission driven.
- Thinking strategically.
- Sustaining a culture of inquiry.
- Maintaining an ethos of transparency; and,
- Serving with integrity at my core.

I look forward to a long and prosperous future for the CPPN. Moreover, my sights are set on building meaningful relationships with you. What you think about the CPPN’s work and its role as Canada’s only national, independent network of, by, and for people living with HIV and HIV co-infection matters to me...

Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow!



Jeff Potts

The CPPN's Leadership Team



Kathleen Bird
Co-Chair, Director At-Large
(kathleenb@cppnrcps.ca)

In her personal life Kathleen Bird is a mother and feels forever blessed with her three daughter's all in their twenties.

Kathleen is a 56-year-old female who uses the pronouns she and her. She was diagnosed HIV+ in January of 2000 and later diagnosed with Hepatitis C in 2006. Kathleen was treated for and cleared HCV in the spring of 2017. Kathleen is a grateful graduate of the Positive Leadership Development Institute (PLDI) and Turning to One Another (TTOA). She currently sits on her local Hep C Advisory and co-facilitates a monthly drop in. Kathleen recently joined the Central East Opening Doors (CEOD) Planning Committee and looks forward to engaging in the conference planning process. Kathleen shares she tries to be available whenever and wherever her local ASO may need her. She is honoured to be a part of the CPPN board of Directors and is eager to work, to learn, and to share in the experience and excitement of the success she is confident the CPPN will achieve.

Brittany Cameron
Co-Chair,
Representative for Women and Girls
(brittanyc@cppnrcps.ca)



Brittany Cameron is a 34-year-old woman living with HIV for over a decade. Living in isolation, Brittany made a commitment to herself and others living with HIV when she decided to focus her career in AIDS work and advocacy. Brittany is a graduate of the Positive Leadership Development Institute (PLDI), a member of the Turning to One Another Network (TTOA); a women's representative on the Provincial Women and HIV Initiative (WHAI), Ontario Women's Working Group, and is a member of the Canadian #UequalsU steering committee. In addition to her unpaid sector work Brittany currently works at PARN – Your Community AIDS Resource Network as Peer, Volunteer and Student Engagement Program Coordinator. In that role Brittany works with people living with HIV in order to assist them as they build their skills and capacity to facilitate programs, while also creating events and conferences in order to educate and strengthen the community. Brittany comes to us with a background in social work and community mobilization. Her values are to engage, enable and empower people living with HIV locally and beyond to find their passion and become active agents of change in their lives and the lives of others.

Deborah Norris
Secretary and Treasurer
Director, Prairie Region
(deborahn@cppnrcps.ca)



Deborah Norris has been an activist and advocate for people living with HIV since soon after her HIV diagnosis in 1991. She has been an active member of the boards of local, provincial, national and international groups of people living with HIV. Deborah originally sat on the Board of CPPN starting in the spring of 2017 and resigned in September of 2018. She was again elected to the CPPN Prairie seat in January of 2019. Since 1992, Deborah has provided peer support to people living with HIV and community education on the social/psychological issues of living with HIV and the basics of HIV infection. In the mid-1990s, she co-founded a non-profit society for women living with HIV in Alberta and was its chairperson for three years. Deborah was recognized by HIV Edmonton with a Community Leadership award and nominated for a Woman of the Year award in Edmonton. She is looking forward to continuing to represent the voices of people living with HIV.



Marlo Cottrell
Director and Representative for
People Living with HIV/HIV Co-
infections
(marloc@cppnrcps.ca)

Marlo Cottrell is a long-term HIV survivor. Diagnosed in 1996, she became an HIV activist and advocate for people living with HIV, while also tackling stigma and discrimination faced with homelessness, gender-based violence and people who use drugs through her lived experience. She has been active in the HIV community since her diagnosis, working on several boards within the local and provincial level.



Rob Olver
Director At-Large
(robo@cppnrcps.ca)

Rob Olver was diagnosed as HIV-positive in 2014, a couple of weeks before he was due to retire. He shares he knew from the start that he wanted to be open about his diagnosis and work to destigmatize HIV in the community and blogging about life with HIV at PositiveLite.com offered him the chance to do that. Shortly after, he became its editor. PositiveLite.com was Canada's online magazine run by and for people living with HIV. It was a peer-led initiative and was unique in that and many other ways, so it was just natural that we were early endorsers/supporters of two other peer-driven initiatives: The U=U movement and the CPPN. PositiveLite.com liked to see peers succeed and direct their own success. The closure of the publication a couple of years ago was just one of several big changes in Rob's life which shifted his focus for a while to more personal matters and a retirement of sorts. The world, the CPPN and we are going through challenging times of late. And there are more challenges to come, some of them unprecedented. So to be able to continue to serve the Canadian HIV community by serving on the board of the CPPN now is an honour for Rob and he approach the work knowing that if we can be our best selves together, we can accomplish great things for all people living with HIV in this country. Rob reports he is looking forward to working with you all.



Jeff Potts
Executive Director
(irpotts@cppnrcps.ca)

In personal life, Jeff Potts is a 51-year old gay man, father to five, and grandfather to four. Jeff is aging with HIV having received a once-fateful diagnosis in the early 90s, and he joined a second survivors' community after a stroke at Thanksgiving 2016, and a second in January 2018.

His life's work found him at CATIE in 1994, and, from there, he held key public service positions in the infectious disease portfolios at Health Canada, Correctional Service Canada, and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Today, Jeff is, is honoured to continue in his community service, humbled by his current role as the Canadian Positive People Network's Executive Director In life and in life's pursuits, Jeff shares a simple objective with Helen Keller. She once said, "I long to accomplish great and noble tasks, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker."

And now, our Feature piece – a member's perspective
"Coping with the Coronavirus: a message from Bob Leahy"

Check in time: how are you doing?

I want to start like this because checking in on each other is one of the most helpful things we can do in these challenging times. Social distancing means cutting off many of the ties we take for granted - and that's hard. Way harder, in fact than washing your hands, or sneezing into your sleeve and all the other important precautions you have heard about. It's necessary though. This epidemic is very real – and potentially very dangerous to the health of our community. Don't believe anyone who says it's fake news, that the risk has been exaggerated or that the virus will just go away soon. It won't.

Given all this, it's very easy to get depressed. Layer that on top of anxiety or downright fear of the virus and it sometimes feels that not only our physical health is at risk but our mental health. Our approach to fighting COVID-19 must recognize that many of us are feeling fragile. We must recognize that protecting our mental health is almost as important as our physical health or we cannot be nearly as effective virus-fighting gladiators.



Here are two pieces of good news though. First, we have been here before. Living with HIV means you probably know how to ride out an epidemic, know about protecting your health and those of others, know about staying strong in the face of adversity. You are a survivor. Secondly, we know that those of us on successful treatment and who have a good immune response (your CD4 will reflect that) are typically no more vulnerable than those who are HIV-negative. Again, our HIV-status puts us at no greater risk of COVID-19 infection than others unless other factors are at play like another underlying illness, age or if you have a low CD4 count.

I worry though that this is all very clinical. It's all about disease control. How we deal with the impact on us as humans – on our mental health, on our relationships, on our sex lives, is playing second fiddle to hand washing instructions or whether to wear facemasks. And that social impact isn't equally shared. Think if you were in prison right now, or a sex worker suddenly with no income or a person needing to share drugs with others, or one who is homeless. The impact on the more marginalized amongst us is magnified in ways we can hardly imagine. We cannot ignore the marginalized in our response to COVID-19.

It's been gratifying in the last few days to see Canadian harm reduction messaging aimed at populations particularly at risk of acquiring COVID-19. I'm talking about those who use drugs and about sex workers. Sometimes we cannot eliminate behaviours, but we try to make them safer. Such is the case here.

I worry particularly about the queer community. Gay men often live alone but place great value on companionship, socializing and – yes - sex. It must feel that social distancing means all this is denied, that months of abstinence are in our future, for instance. Trouble is abstinence is hard, so hard in fact it doesn't work. We know it failed in the response to HIV. Thus, we need a solutions-oriented community conversation around this, about harm reduction for gay men in the age of COVID-19.

As I've said to others, these are early days. We have only just started to address the impact of the epidemic. We have seen infection control addressed, we have seen the economic implications addressed but there remains a gap, I think, in how we address the impact on us as humans. We need to address the human needs of those of us under extraordinary pressures. This is not the time for moralizing about lifestyles, about drug use, about sex. Let's just get on with it.

I said there were two pieces of good news. I have a third. Epidemics like this have a start date and an end date. Truthfully, I think it's going to be a long haul; this will be a summer like no other. But we can do this. Our community is strong with strong people supporting us, there for us. Think about touching base with them just as you would our family and friends. I already see this happening. People are checking in on each other, offering to pick up groceries, connecting in ways we never did before.

Want more inspiration? It's in this article that brought me joy. It will bring you joy too. Here are "eleven things to lift your spirits."
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/03/18/coronavirus-acts-of-kindness/>

See you on the other side folks!

If you are in crisis and need some assistance call Crisis Services Canada toll free at 1-833-456-4566

If you are not in crisis but need to talk to someone contact The Canadian Mental Health Association to find your local CMHA. <https://tinyurl.com/tsof7e9>



How about a bit of a closer look at Coronavirus (COVID-19)

How Coronavirus spreads

Human coronaviruses cause infections of the nose, throat and lungs. They are most spread from an infected person through:

- respiratory droplets generated when you cough or sneeze
- close, prolonged personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands
- Current evidence suggests person-to-person spread is efficient when there is close contact.

Preventing Coronavirus

Canadians should continue to think ahead about the actions that they can take to stay healthy and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Canada, including:

- Being prepared in case you or a family member become ill
- Following the latest travel advice from federal and provincial public health leaders:
- Avoiding all non-essential travel, including cruise ships
- Self-isolating, and monitoring for symptoms (cough, fever or difficulty breathing) for 14 days if you have travelled outside of Canada
- Reducing contact with others by following the guidance for self-monitoring, self-isolating, or isolating
- Practicing social distancing, by making a conscious effort to keep a physical distance between each other. Social distancing is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak. This means making changes in your everyday routine to minimize close contact with others including: avoiding crowded places and non-essential groups, avoiding common greetings such as handshakes, limiting contact with people at a higher risk like older adults and those in poor health and keeping a distance of at least 2 arms-length from others.
- Proper hygiene which can help reduce the risk of infection or spreading infection to others. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the bathroom and preparing food, use alcohol-based sanitizer if soap and water are not available
- When coughing or sneezing cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your arm, not your hand and be sure to dispose of any tissues you have used as soon as possible and wash your hands afterwards.
- Avoid touching your face including your eyes, nose and mouth
- Wearing masks, if necessary

Do you think you might have COVID-19? Use this Government of Canada self-assessment tool to find out what to do. <https://ca.thrive.health/covid19/en>

Other Coronavirus Conversations in the news lately...

Open Letter to Government: COVID-19 – Protecting Prisoner Health, https://tinyurl.com/yx4cddor	How queer and marginalized communities can take care of one another during COVID-19 https://tinyurl.com/yx6s3ls7	Lessons from AIDS on how to survive coronavirus https://tinyurl.com/yx794szr
Lessons learnt from the HIV response for COVID-19: Building community resilience (GNP+) https://tinyurl.com/grzf44x	Coronavirus control measures are super important. But they are not enough! https://tinyurl.com/r5gafd8	LGBT+ ER nurse begs gay men to stop going out and hooking up. https://tinyurl.com/wvdwer9
Guards union says prison needle exchange expansion on hold because of COVID-19 https://tinyurl.com/s49lzwe	The Coronavirus is a Disaster for Feminism https://tinyurl.com/tl3pbbq	

Coronavirus/COVID-19 Resources



Organization	Resource Title	External Link
CATIE	Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), HIV and hepatitis C: What you need to know	https://tinyurl.com/udol9tx
Canadian Drug Policy Coalition	COVID-19 Harm Reduction Resources	https://tinyurl.com/rknf92u
Harm Reduction Coalition	COVID-19 Guidance for People Who Use Drugs and Harm Reduction Programs	https://tinyurl.com/yx2gbqu8
Red Braid Alliance	Isolate how? COVID-19 means unite and fight!	https://tinyurl.com/wjaoqxf
Butterfly Asian and Migrant Sex Workers Support Network and Maggie's Toronto Sex Worker's Action Project	Sex Work COVID-19: Guidelines for Sex Workers, Clients, Third Parties and Allies	https://tinyurl.com/veyhskf
World Health Organization	Q&A on COVID-19, HIV and antiretrovirals	https://tinyurl.com/rjr84mj
Shared Collective Community Resource (Creator Unknown) Google Drive	Resources for Safe Consumption Sites, Overdose Prevention Sites, Prisoners, Safer Drug Use, Harm Reduction, Safe Sex, Homelessness and much more!	https://tinyurl.com/see6sij
Shared Collective Community Resource (Creator Unknown) Google Drive	Coronavirus Resource Kit – This resource kit is USA based however features resources from disabled, queer, elderly, Asian, and indigenous people.	https://tinyurl.com/s2z2e8m

"Snapshots"	
<p>CPPN – by the numbers</p> <p>206 and climbing!</p> <p>But we need our members' help to update/confirm our records. Then, we will be able to illustrate our presence by province and territory.</p>	<p>Save the date(s)</p> <p>April 19-25, 2020</p> <p>A time to celebrate and thank Canada's 12.7 million volunteers.</p> <p>This year's theme: <u>"It's time to applaud this country's volunteers."</u></p> <p>April 9th is World Autism Day</p> <p>April 7th is World Health Day</p> <p>April 17th is World Hemophilia Day</p> <p>April 28th is the National Day of Mourning</p>