



Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition  
Coalition Santé Arc-en-ciel Canada

Dear friends,

In November of 2003 the Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition began a new journey on the road to addressing the health and wellness of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people in Canada. With \$2.3 million in funding we began our Rainbow Health: Improving Access To Care project funded by the Primary Health Care Division of Health Canada. The funding was the largest ever received by a GLBT community based organization in Canada.

Much of that funding was spent to contract with 8 GLBT community groups across the country to produce resources on a variety of health and wellness issues. Those 8 organizations have produced a variety of resources that can be used by other groups across the country to address the varied health issues that impact on our communities and our lives. Some of those resources have already been placed on our website and others will be added over the next couple weeks. Look for the red box with "Project" to the right of documents to find those that have been produced by our community partners. Feel free to use these and other documents from our website in the work that you are doing to address GLBT health and wellness.

Over the past 29 months we have achieved numerous successes in our work. We have hosted two national GLBT health and wellness conferences that were well attended by people from across the country working on GLBT health issues. Our website is the largest electronic clearinghouse in the world on GLBT health and wellness information and we anticipate over 1 million hits this year. Our groundbreaking [Outlive homophobia campaign](#) is garnering praise across the country and is being used by GLBT organizations in every corner of Canada. Last year we partnered with Fondation Émergence in Montréal to make the National Day Against Homophobia a truly national event with over 250 groups participating across Canada. We are currently acting as consultants in the reorganization of training for social workers in one province and are regularly consulted by other organizations and institutions on issues related to GLBT health and wellness.

Over the past two years we have met with numerous health related organizations to encourage them to adopt policies to end homophobia in our health care system and to educate their staff on the health issues faced by GLBT people. We hosted a meeting of researchers looking at GLBT health and wellness as well as a meeting of representatives of national health care accreditation bodies, national health professional associations and national health care delivery associations. We conducted an environmental scan of schools of medicine, nursing and social work to assess the levels of training they provide to their students on GLBT health issues. Needless to say, few health care organizations in this country are serious about addressing GLBT health and wellness issues.

Funding for our Improving Access to Care project has now ended but we at the CRHC are committed to continuing to work nationally to address the vast range of health and wellness issues that exact such a toll on the lives of people in our communities. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees GLBT people full equality in all areas of our lives. Unfortunately, we do not enjoy equality when it comes to our health and wellness. We are not acknowledged as a specific

population with unique needs in health policy; health care students and professionals receive inadequate education, if any, on our health issues; and dedicated funding streams for GLBT health issues are not available. This must not be allowed to continue.

We have applied for funding to continue our important work but in a changed political climate we are uncertain about the success of those funding applications. We have had to issue layoff notices to three of the four staff at the CRHC and without adequate financial resources it will be difficult to keep the doors open for long without adequate funding. While Health Canada provides core funding to other national organizations that address specific populations and specific health issues, they to date have been unwilling to provide core funding to the one national organization dedicated to improving the health and wellness of GLBT Canadians.

While we are committed to continuing to address the nine recommendations of the [Saskatoon Declaration on GLBT Health & Wellness](#) , we need your support to continue doing this crucial work. We believe it is important to have a national organization to enable all of us across the country to remain in touch with one another as we work to create communities that value our lives and our health and wellness. We need your support in this endeavor. If your organization, or you, is not a member we encourage you to become one ([click here for membership information](#)). We believe it's important to join together in one large coalition to show health funders in this country that we are serious about having our health needs addressed in appropriate and timely ways. Your support through membership will help us build a strong coalition that can let governments know that we are not willing to rest until we achieve full equality in our health care and in our health status. If you are able to make a donation we would appreciate that also. Your support will help ensure we can continue to do the important work that we've been doing for the past three years.

Won't you join with us in building a stronger GLBT health and wellness movement in Canada? Because health and wellness is a right.



Gens Hellquist  
Executive Director