



Ontario's HIV sector stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter to resist anti-Black racism and anti-Black violence

Over the past week, we've witnessed unprecedented violence against Black communities in North America - much of it the hands of police and the state. The latest incidents of state-sanctioned violence against Black people, including **Regis Korchinski-Paquet, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade** and countless others, remind us that to be Black in North America is to live with enduring and historic anti-Black racism that perpetuates violence, and systemic, economic, health and social inequities. In recognition of these realities, the Ontario AIDS Network and its members stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter movements in Ontario, across Canada, and around the world.

This is a critical moment for Ontario's HIV sector to stand in solidarity with Black communities and speak out against anti-Black racism. It is vital that our network commit publicly to challenging white supremacy and to raising our collective voice against pervasive violence and systemic discrimination against Black people.

Our organizations and movement are built on foundational social justice principles that endure in our work to this day. Many of these same principles lay at the foundation of the Black Lives Matter movement. Our histories of collective HIV activism and the 51st anniversary of the Stonewall riots are prescient reminders of our deep roots of social action and resistance and of what change can come when we act together.

As we continue to use our collective tools and voices to dismantle HIV stigma and to challenge the status quo, we must begin to speak out louder on behalf of and with Black communities and organizations like Black Lives Matter. We must collectively acknowledge high and persistent HIV rates in Ontario's African, Caribbean and Black communities and the ways that anti-Black racism and persistent health inequities contribute to this reality. Our collective voices must also rise in resistance to anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Trans inclusion, and countless other forms of oppression in our community.

While the state has indeed perpetrated violence against Black communities, we must acknowledge the role of our organizations in perpetuating this violence. As community-based organizations, we must examine the ways in which our own silence makes us complicit and commit to better identifying and addressing occurrences of anti-Black racism within our sector and organizations.

The Ontario AIDS Network and its membership stand with those fighting for the fair and equitable treatment of Black communities at home and abroad. We the undersigned:

- Affirm this statement in solidarity with Black communities and with the Black Lives Matter movement.
- Commit ourselves to challenging anti-Black racism and violence through our actions.
- Commit to ensuring that Black communities who access HIV-related services in Ontario can do so without fear of discrimination.

Black Lives Matter!

On behalf of the Board and staff of the Ontario AIDS Network,

Shannon Thomas Ryan
Executive Director