

reACT-Believe

The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay
Spring, 1997 Volume 10, Issue 1



Pledge To Renew National AIDS Strategy



by Michael Sobota, Executive Director, ACT-B

Prime Minister Jean Chretien, in a speech in Vancouver on April 29, 1997, announced his government's commitment to renew the National AIDS Strategy (NAS). The current NAS is scheduled to expire in about 10 months. The fact that the Prime Minister himself made this announcement, and that it is committed in writing in the Liberal Party's current "Red Book", is a significant achievement in overall HIV/AIDS policy development.

Many, many individuals participated in the advocacy efforts aimed at the Federal Government toward renewing the NAS. The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay, together with its sister agencies in Ontario and other National partners, have been lobbying extensively for the renewal for more than a year. We want to thank all of you who responded to our requests for letter writing and petition signing. We thank local Members of Parliament, Stan Dromisky and Joe Comuzzi for the time they gave in meetings with us, and for taking public stands in support of renewing the NAS. We thank the Prime Minister for making this promise.

While the Prime Minister's announcement is a welcome one, we are well aware that this commitment is being made during an election campaign. The actual commitment as stated in the Liberal Party's new "Red Book" says:

"The HIV/AIDS epidemic is a third critical health challenge facing Canada today (Ed. note: together with breast cancer and smoking). An estimated 20,000 Canadians now suffer from AIDS, while close to 45,000 Canadians are infected with HIV. The bulk of the AIDS epidemic lies ahead of us, not behind us; another 10,000 to 20,000 Canadians are expected to contract AIDS by the year 2,000.

In 1993, this government launched Phase II of the NAS, providing \$40.7 million annually for five years to combat
continued on page 7...

AIDS
IS
AN ELECTION ISSUE

**Is HIV/AIDS still a
problem in Canada?**

YES

There are more Canadians
living with HIV now than
ever before, and the
number is growing.

Under the cover.....

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Health Promotion Insert: Viral Load Testing

Education Update

The changing face of AIDS by David Belrose, Education Coordinator

This year's social marketing campaign has focused on the changes that are happening in HIV infections in our region. We have tried to make people aware of the fact that increasing numbers of people are living with HIV/AIDS in Northwestern Ontario and they come from all walks of life, all ages, all racial and ethnic backgrounds and both genders.

Along the same lines, the Canadian AIDS Society has declared the theme for National AIDS Awareness Week, September 29 to October 5, 1997 to be "The Changing Face of HIV/AIDS."

Think about ways that you can help make your school, your agency, your community more aware, more compassionate and safer. Plan to become involved in AIDS Awareness Week this year. Call us for ideas or assistance.

ACT-B Library

In spite of our efforts to get the word out, our well-stocked resource library continues to be little-known in the wider community. We have received compliments from knowledgeable people about the richness and diversity of our holdings on HIV/AIDS and related issues.

Whether you are a person with HIV/AIDS, a family member, a health care professional, a student working on a paper or an interested member of the public, this library is available to you. Books, videos and other material can be used in the library itself or, in most cases, borrowed for up to two weeks. Our library is located at 217 S. Algoma.

Substance Use Outreach Project (SUOP) by Janet Adams

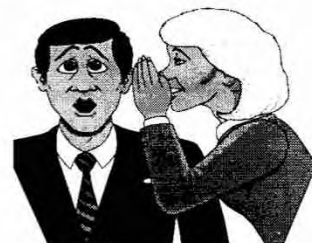
The Substance Use Outreach Project (SUOP) has been running since December 1996. Five peer ambassadors have been trained to do outreach. You may have seen them at your favourite bar, fitness club, coffee shop or mall, handing out condoms, sharing information about safer sex, harm reduction, HIV and substance use.

If you take the city bus, you will see our ads. Four ads have been designed to highlight the relationship between substance use and the risks of HIV. Each ad will run for three months on all 49 city buses. The ads will also be made into posters.

We have produced cards and match books that provide info and tips about harm reduction, safer using and safer sex. The cards talk about local agencies offering anonymous testing, needle exchange, detox, assessment, drug treatment and support for people infected with HIV or affected by HIV/AIDS.

Over the next year, we will be hosting several mini cabaret nights in local bars. We'll offer information, free stuff and a Tiny Sex Theatre Play entitled "Ken's Night Out". The peer ambassadors will be at the bar night to answer any questions about harm reduction, safer sex, HIV and substance use.

If you would like some information cards, matches or posters, call Janet at the AIDS Committee - 345-1516.



AIDS

RISK?

HIV/AIDS is a risk—especially if you drink before sex or use injection drugs. HIV/AIDS can be prevented. Learn how to protect yourself. Call:

1-807-345-1516

act

AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay

Here.....and there.....

Volunteers honoured...

On Wednesday, April 2, 1997, AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay volunteers were honoured at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Night. Pizza, punch and popcorn were on the menu, and the room was abuzz with chatty friends catching up on gossip. The 80 volunteers in attendance were entertained by the Thunder Bay Theatre Sports League's high paced improvised theatre games.

All volunteers received a certificate of appreciation, red ribbon pin and pen. Volunteers who contributed over 50 hours of service were also awarded ACT-B T-shirts.

Three outstanding volunteers were recognized. Linda MacKay and Anne Ciemny have both contributed over 200 hours of service as receptionists during 1996. Pius White was presented with the coveted "Volunteer of the Year" award for his superlative achievements as an advocate, spokesperson, board director and volunteer.

The AIDS Committee commends over 155 volunteers for their dedication and excellence in voluntarism.

Mayor's Salute....

On Wednesday, April 16, in celebration of *National Volunteer Week*, two ACT-B volunteers were honoured at the Mayor's Salute. Mayor David Hamilton bestowed "Certificates of Achievement" on Linda MacKay and Pius White for their commitment to the AIDS Committee. 70 volunteers from 35 agencies throughout Thunder Bay were recognized at this event.

AIDS specialist to visit...

Dr. Richard Fralick, an HIV/AIDS specialist from Toronto, will be visiting Thunder Bay to provide consultation for people living with HIV/AIDS and their physicians. This pilot project will be re-evaluated in six months.

Dr. Fralick's first clinic was held at the Immunology Department at St. Joseph's Hospital on Wednesday, May 14. There were more clients seeking appointments than could be accommodated on that day.

If you wish to see Dr. Fralick, you must have a referral from your physician. If you don't have a physician, contact Sheila Berry at the AIDS Committee. For further information about dates and booking procedures call 345-1516.

Did you know...

- between 2,500 and 3,000 new HIV infections are reported in Canada each year.

- SOURCE: The Globe & Mail, February 15, 1997

Amsterdam Conference....

ACT-B volunteer and board member, Pius White, will be attending the *3rd International Conference on Home and Community Care for persons living with HIV/AIDS*. The conference runs May 21-24 in Amsterdam.

The theme is "Meeting the needs of the infected and affected."

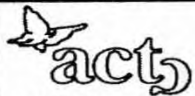
Pius has been awarded a full scholarship by the conference organizers. Watch for a report in the next *reACT-Believe!*

AIDS

GET IT?

Don't. HIV/AIDS is final. And it's occurring more in women, our young people and aboriginal population. Find out what you can do. Call:

1-807-345-1516


AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay

Fundraising News

by John Books - Fundraising Coordinator

Thank you to all those who have supported the AIDS Committee during this past year. I am very happy to report that we were able to surpass our fundraising goal of \$80,000. We could not have done this without the hard work and the support of so many people in our community.

But this never ending fundraising wheel moves on and this year, we must raise \$84,000. Our new campaign began with the fourth annual Art AIDS Auction. Though the auction was a success in many ways, fewer patrons attended than anticipated and we fell \$2000 short of our \$6000 goal. It was, however, a remarkable effort and one that we can be proud of. The craft and art community donated generously, and those patrons who attended enjoyed the event thoroughly.

In mid July, during the Harbourfest celebrations, we will again be hosting the Cheesecake Challenge. Professional and amateur chefs may enter, with prizes for the best cakes in both categories. If you are interested in entering or would like to volunteer, call us at 345-1516

The big event of the year will be the AIDS Walk Thunder Bay, to be held on September 28th. We need your help to make this the most successful Walk ever. **Our goal is to raise \$18,000.** Roughly translated, 180 walkers need to raise \$100 worth of pledges each. There are many ways you can get involved: be a volunteer on the Walk Committee; ask your family, friends and co-workers to sponsor you; form a challenge team with your friends. Pledge forms will be available at the office in July.

Come Walk With US!

You said you'd always be there
but since you heard the news,
there's a distance that has come
between us
that I don't understand.

You said you'd always love me
no matter what came our way,
Now someone close to me has the virus.
I can't find you anywhere.

I need your support and understanding.
I need you to let me know
that things between us are still the same,
because I need you in my life.

by
Sandy Johnston

**AIDS Walk Thunder Bay
Sunday, September 28, 1997
Lakehead University Outpost**

Supporting the
services provided by
the AIDS Committee
of Thunder Bay in
the fight against
AIDS



- ☐ Yes, I want to participate. Please send me more information.
Name:.....
Address:.....
Postal Code:.....
- ☐ Yes, I want to help as a volunteer.
Telephone:.....

Return to:
AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay
P.O. Box 24025
RPO Downtown North
Thunder Bay ON P7A 8A9

Health Promotion

by Daryle Dollan, Support Services/Health Promoter

Viral load testing

What is viral load testing? What do the results mean and why should you have a viral load test done? In this issue of *reACT-Believe*, I would like to answer those questions for you.

What is a viral load test?

Quite simply, a viral load test measures the amount of virus (HIV) in the blood. It is not a complicated procedure and is very much like a blood test. Your doctor can order the test on a special form, and you will be asked to go to the lab (usually on a particular day). The lab worker will draw some blood, and send this blood to a lab in another city where the viral load tests are done. The results of this test will be returned to your doctor, who will discuss the results of the viral load test with you.

What do the results mean?

The results of a viral load test can be a good indicator of where the virus (HIV) is going or how much damage it is doing. For example, if your viral load is high, the virus is doing damage to your immune system and could progress more quickly to AIDS than if your viral load is low.

Why should I get a viral load test?

There are good reasons to get a viral load test done. The results of viral load tests, when looked at with your T-cell counts (also known as CD-4 and CD-8 counts) are the best way to decide when and what kind of treatment or therapy is necessary.

In managing your health, it is best to have TWO tests done: a viral load test, and T-cell counts. Because results can vary, it is advisable to get another series of THE SAME TESTS done, 2-4 weeks later. This will provide you and your doctor with a more stable base ("base line") to look at when deciding what your treatment options are.

Before starting any kind of new therapy, it is a good idea to have a viral load test. Then, after you have been on the therapy for 4-6 weeks, another viral load test can show whether the treatment is working. For example, let's say that based on the results of your CD4-CD8 counts and viral load tests, you and your doctor decided to try a combination therapy consisting of AZT, 3TC and Indinavir. Six weeks later, your next viral load test showed a big decrease and one month later (and another viral load test later), it showed a continued decrease. This is a very good sign that the combination therapy you are using to combat the virus is working.

A word of warning....

You may have heard that some of the new combination therapies (including a protease inhibitor) can lower the amount of HIV in a person's body (as measured by a viral load test) to undetectable levels. **This does not mean that you are cured, or that you no longer have the virus,** but these therapies can make you feel healthier and, in some cases, can dramatically improve your health.

Key to Antiviral Names and Status

Nucleoside Analogues: act on early stage of reproduction of HIV virus

GENERIC/CHEMICAL NAME	BRAND NAME	MANUFACTURER	APPROVED IN. . .	PAYMENT STATUS ONTARIO
AZT - Zidovudine, Azidothymidine	Retrovir	Glaxo Wellcome	Canada, 1987	Sunnybrook list
ddC - Dideoxycytidine	Hivid	Hoffman-LaRoche	Canada	Sunnybrook List
ddI - Didanosine	Videx	Bristol-Myers Squibb	Canada	Sunnybrook List
Lamivudine	3TC, Epivir	Glaxo Wellcome	Canada - developed here	Limited Use Product
d4T - Stavudine	Zerit	Bristol-Myers Squibb	Canada, July 8, 1996	Limited Use Product

Protease Inhibitors: block later stages of viral reproduction

GENERIC/CHEMICAL NAME	BRAND NAME	MANUFACTURER	APPROVED IN..	PAYMENT STATUS
Saquinavir	Invirase	Hoffman-LaRoche	Canada	Limited Use Product
Indinavir	Crixivan	Merck & Co.	Canada, Sept. 18, 1996	Limited Use Product
Ritonavir	Norvir	Abbott	Canada, Aug. 14, 1996	Limited Use Product
Nelfinavir	Viracept	Agouron	Experimental	None, no EAP or CA

Non-nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors (NNRTI): delay replication of the virus

GENERIC/CHEMICAL NAME	BRAND NAME	MANUFACTURER	APPROVED IN..	PAYMENT STATUS
Nevirapine	Viramune	Boehringer-Ingelheim	USA, Pending - Canada	Expanded Access Program
Delavirdine	Rescriptor	Pharmacia & Upjohn	Pending - Canada, USA	Expanded Access Program
Loviride	no brand name	Janssen	experimental in Europe	none, no EAP or CA

Sunnybrook List - Sunnybrook manages this distribution to hospitals in Ontario and the drugs on it are available without cost to anyone for whom they are prescribed, regardless of income.

Limited Use Product - These drugs are listed in Section III of the Formulary (the main list of drugs) but have a *Limited Use* status. For 3TC and Saquinavir, this means that an HIV registered physician must prescribe them and must fill out a *Limited Use/Nutrition Products* form. This form is given to the patient along with the prescription and the patient gives both to the pharmacist.

Facilitated Access List - This is Section 6 of the Formulary (#35) and is comprised entirely of products used in the treatment of people with HIV/AIDS. They must be prescribed by an HIV Registered physician, in order to be covered by ODB, TDP. There is no form, nor letter, that the physician needs to provide to patients nor to the Drug Programs Branch of the Ministry of Health. Many private insurance carriers will also cover these drugs. It is a fairly simple process for a doctor to become a registered HIV physician. None of the above drugs is on this list.

Section 8 - This is a letter that your doctor writes requesting Section 8 approval, to pay for a drug through ODB or TDP, which she prescribes for you. If you intend to submit a TDP claim for a Section 8 drug, the date of the Section 8 *approval* must be earlier than the date on which the prescription was approved. Your doctor will know how to do a Section 8, remind him if you are planning to submit a TDP claim, to include this information.

Expanded Access Program (EAP) or Compassionate Access (CA) - This is free access to the drug, often in an experimental protocol. These are offered by the drug company, primarily before approval by Canada. Often one's free supply is continued for a period of time once it is approved. Your doctor makes application for you.

ODB - Ontario Drug Benefits - To get these benefits you must qualify for FBA or be a senior. Neither ODB nor TDP pays for drugs that are experimental. They must be approved/released by Health Canada.

TDP - Trillium Drug Program - This is also an Ontario Ministry of Health program. It is an income based program for which you apply annually (April 1 thru March 31). It's intention is to give financial assistance to people who are not eligible for FBA/ODB and who have high drug costs. Your pharmacist will have application/information packets. Use only the packets/applications with the orange stripe. TDP will NO longer accept the green striped application.

AIDS Teaching Tool Developed for Aboriginal People

Article reprinted with permission from Canadian AIDS News, Volume ix, Number 2, fall 1996. Poster reprinted with permission from Gabe Kakeway.

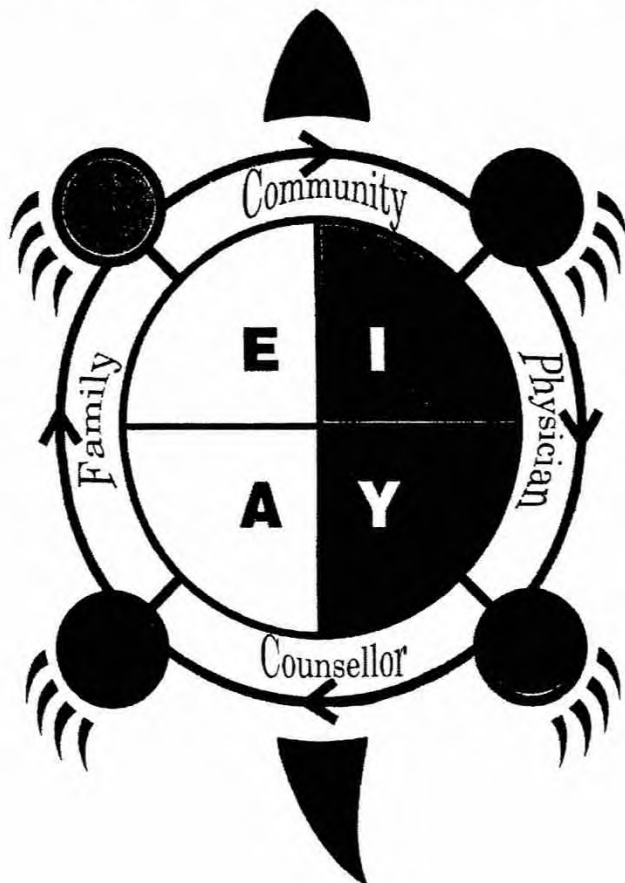
HIV/AIDS Wheel

An interpretation of the medicine wheel based on the ancient symbol of the circle explains how HIV affects all aspects of life: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. It also shows how a person living with HIV passes through cycles of growth from an infant, to a youth, an adult and an elder. The concept and design of this wheel came from Leonard Johnston, who with Frederick Haineault, were co-founders of Healing Our Spirit, the BC First Nations AIDS Prevention Society in Vancouver. Leonard and Frederick used the HIV/AIDS wheel to incorporate Aboriginal teachings into their HIV prevention work. Leonard and Frederick have

both since passed away due to complications related to AIDS.

HIV/AIDS Teaching Turtle Poster

This poster integrates the HIV/AIDS wheel into the body of an animal recognized as a spiritual guide by Aboriginal people. The turtle symbol includes the colours of the four directions: east as yellow, south as red, west as black, north as white. The colours of the four elements of creation are also noted: blue for water, green for plants, brown for earth and purple for fire. The poster shows how a person living with HIV can find support and healing from the physician or traditional healer, counsellors and family, and community members. This tool is unique because it identifies staying healthy as being in tune with the environment. The concept and design for this tool came from Gabe Kakeway of Grand Council Treaty #3 in Kenora, Ontario.



dear robbie; IMHO

by Rob MacKay

Well, here we are with a new issue of Re-ACT-Believe. And for all you information hungry readers, we have a new feature!

"dear robbie; IMHO", will attempt to answer all those hard to ask questions in a fun and informative way.

If you are one of those acronym hounds and can't quite figure IMHO, it stands for "In My Humble Opinion". However, a good friend of mine once told me that it really means you can say whatever you want in print, as long as you end it with IMHO.

dear robbie,

I was recently in a situation that I didn't know how to handle and I need your advice. In the staff coffee room at work, we frequently run into problems with people using coffee mugs other than their own. One of my co-workers, sick of retrieving her cup, placed an "HIV Positive" sign on her mug as a deterrent. I was infuriated and felt that our AIDS education efforts had somehow failed. What could I have done to address this situation?

Signed, Infuriated.

Dear Infuriated,

Why drink from it of course! Sometimes the only way to combat ignorance is to confront it. Your co-worker was very clever to capitalize on unrealistic fear to get what she wanted. Unfortunately her goal is very selfish and shortsighted. You, my friend, are seeing the larger and more important picture. You may however be wrong in assuming we have failed at AIDS education. We just aren't done yet.

AIDS education in North America has had a monumental effect on reducing infection rates and increasing knowledge about transmission. But as they say, "it ain't over till the horizontally challenged lady sings". So, sit back, pour yourself a cuppa Java in that marked cup, and be prepared to answer some



interesting questions. If you feel you need more information, be sure to ask our knowledgeable Education Coordinator at ACT-B.

IMHO; robbie

dear robbie,

My boyfriend was in a fight and came home with blood on his shirt. Is dried blood infectious? Do I run a risk of contracting HIV if I wash his clothes with mine? Should I be tested?

Signed Scared.

Dear Scared,

HIV is a very difficult thing to transmit. Unless you get the blood (or other body fluid) of an infected person in your blood stream, you are not at risk. Also, HIV is a very fragile virus, outside the "host", it dies very quickly. Soooooo, unless your boyfriend had unprotected anal intercourse with the man before he beat him up, you don't have too much to worry about. The "should you be tested" question I cannot answer. You may very well have other risk factors. robbie suggests you seek out a trained HIV counsellor or educator so that you can examine ALL your risk factors before deciding if you should be tested.

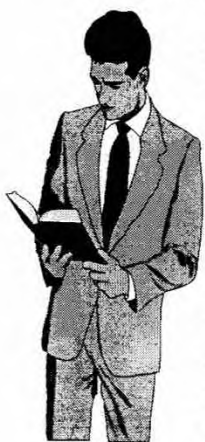
IMHO; robbie.

Please address your questions for "dear robbie" to *reACT-Believe*. Address is on page 8.

Who's "In Control"?

ACT-B Publishing Success Story

Over the years, ACT-B has produced a variety of successful prevention and education materials. Most recently, we reprinted ***IN CONTROL Maintaining Healthy Sex: A Brochure for Gay and Bisexual Men.***



This brochure, developed in Thunder Bay, has sold over 12,500 copies — many of them in the United States.

In a simple and visually appealing way, ***IN CONTROL*** looks at the difficulties men face in trying to consistently practise safer sex. Copies of the brochure are once again available. Please call 345-1516 for a sample copy and pricing information.

Rick Atkinson Receives Gary Gillam Award

This award is presented to three Canadians who demonstrate exemplary achievements in promoting social responsibility in credit unions. Rick has been on the Bay Credit Union Board since 1989. He has also served on ACT-B's Board for the past 6 years. Rick has worked as a community legal worker in many capacities and provides representation and legal advice to clients in all areas of "poverty law". He has always been a strong advocate of social responsibility. Congratulations Rick!

Jo-Ann Jacomb takes leave of absence!

Volunteer Coordinator Jo-Ann Jacomb (also known as Jo-Ann Waytowich) will be running her play "*I Can Sing! (Can't I?)*" at Magnus Theatre this summer. Replacing her from June 15 to August 2 will be Carrie-Anne Whidden. Good luck to both of you!

Did you know. . .

The Toronto Department of Public Health reports that 65% of males and 47% of females will have had three or more sexual partners by the time they graduate from high school. And, despite the barrage of safer sex messages aimed at teenagers, only 27% of adolescents report using a condom the first time they had sexual intercourse.

-SOURCE: *The Globe & Mail*,
February 15, 1997

continued from page 1. . .

the AIDS epidemic. This investment - together with the efforts of provinces, the medical and research community, community organizations, and people living with HIV and AIDS - has led to tangible progress in research, education, prevention, care and treatment. Canada now has an effective community support network, while research and fast-tracking of drug approvals has led to improved drug therapies and new hope for those living with HIV and AIDS.

As the incidence of HIV and AIDS continues to increase, however, it is clear that we must continue our efforts. A new Liberal government will extend the National AIDS Strategy at current funding levels for an additional five years (Ed. Note: through March 31, 2002)".

The above is an election promise. At this writing, we do not know who will form the next Federal government. From the Liberals' own words, it is clear that AIDS is an election issue. If you want further details about what you can do during and after the election campaign, call our office at (807)345-1516. And again, thank you for all of your support.



Parting Glance



Mother's Cupboard Gives Thanks!

The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay has been operating a small food bank called ***Mother's Cupboard*** for the past four years. We would like to thank our community partners who generously donate to this project :

Comcare	Confederation College Students
Kellogg's	Current River United Church
Saan	Knox United Church (Shuniah)
Lakehead University Students	
Psi Master Chapter Beta Sigma Phi	
St. John's Anglican Church	
Thunder Bay Whiskey Jacks	

A special thank you goes to the First Presbyterian Church on Grey Street, who set aside Sunday, May 11 as a food drive day for the AIDS Committee. We were astonished and very grateful when **boxes and boxes** of food arrived at our door. Thank you for your most generous contribution.

If you would like to make a donation of non-perishable food to Mother's Cupboard, please contact ACT-B at 345-1516.



The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay acknowledges and thanks our various funders:

- Ontario Ministry of Health - AIDS Bureau
- Health Promotion and Programs Branch, Ontario Region, Health Canada (ACAP)
- All of the people involved in general fundraising and the support of many local businesses and individuals.

The opinions and medical information offered by "**reACT-Believe**" are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of the staff and Board of Directors of the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay. Medical information offered should be used at your own discretion. Please consult your doctor.

Please address any comments or concerns to

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P.O. Box 24025
RPO Downtown North
Thunder Bay ON P7A 8A9
(807) 345-1516

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Yes! I want to become a member of ACT-B! I know that my contribution will really count! Here is my donation of \$10.00___, \$20.00___ or \$50.00___.

Name:

Address:

City, Province & P.C:

Telephone: