

RE **ACT-B** ELIEVE

THE AIDS COMMITTEE OF THUNDER BAY NEWSLETTER
FALL 1988

VOL. 1 ISSUE 2

candlelight VIGIL

to remember and support

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1988
7:30 P.M.

ASSEMBLE AT 283 BAY ST.,
FOR A SHORT, SILENT WALK
TO UNITARIAN CHURCH

The ReACT-Believe is published quarterly by the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay (ACT-B). The Committee was incorporated in October, 1987 and is a registered non-profit charitable organization. charity number is 0779330-11.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This issue of the newsletter focuses on AIDS Awareness Week, the second such annual event in Thunder Bay, and this year a province-wide event for the first time. This year's theme of "Living With AIDS" gives us the occasion to reflect on our current situation, and try to understand just where we are in relation to this epidemic.

Only a few short years ago, AIDS was unheard of, but now we know it is an ever-present fact of life. For persons with AIDS, or those who are HIV-positive, life has taken on new dimensions, and calls forth new attitudes and approaches. It is no longer enough to live blindly and carelessly. We are all faced with the need to re-assess our lifestyles, our health options, and our feelings about death and life.

Linked very closely with all this is the concept of homophobia (the irrational fear of homosexuality and homosexuals). The ability of society to cope with AIDS is linked very directly with its attitudes to sex and sexuality in all its variations. The recent debate in the United Church over gay ordination shows only too clearly the lack of real understanding in society of what it means to be gay, to see the world from a gay perspective.

When we encounter opposition to plans for specific safer-sex education, when people feel we must be very careful how we present ourselves as the AIDS Committee, when gay men are afraid to get help because their fear of being thought of as gay is too strong, or when a thousand other things cloud the air and prevent clear seeing, then we are facing the many and varied aspects of homophobia.

There are many elements involved in "Living With AIDS", some of which are addressed elsewhere in this newsletter. I want to urge all of you who are reading this, to take some time to consider your personal feelings around homosexuality and gayness. In particular, if you are gay or bi-sexual yourself, you have personal responsibility to assess your attitudes and decide whether you are part of the solution or part of the problem. Homophobia is one of the most profound issues that we have to deal with in these times, and I expect the Committee to deal with this in a variety of ways in the months ahead.

To change the subject now, I want to address the matter of the organization and development of ACT-B. Over the past few months, the board of directors has developed a set of by-laws, as well as a number of important policies concerning our operations and procedures. In November of this year, we will be holding our Annual General Meeting, at which time a board of directors will be formally elected by the members, and our by-laws approved. Now is the time to become a member of ACT-B, if you have not already done so, to ensure that you have a voice in the future of the organization.

Special thanks go to all volunteers. You have done a lot of important work in the past months, and your involvement will be all the more essential as we expand our work of education and support in the future.

Let us all use AIDS Awareness Week as an opportunity to make the community aware of what we have to offer, and to help everyone overcome their fears in this time of "Living With AIDS".

David Belrose

FIRST PUBLISHING

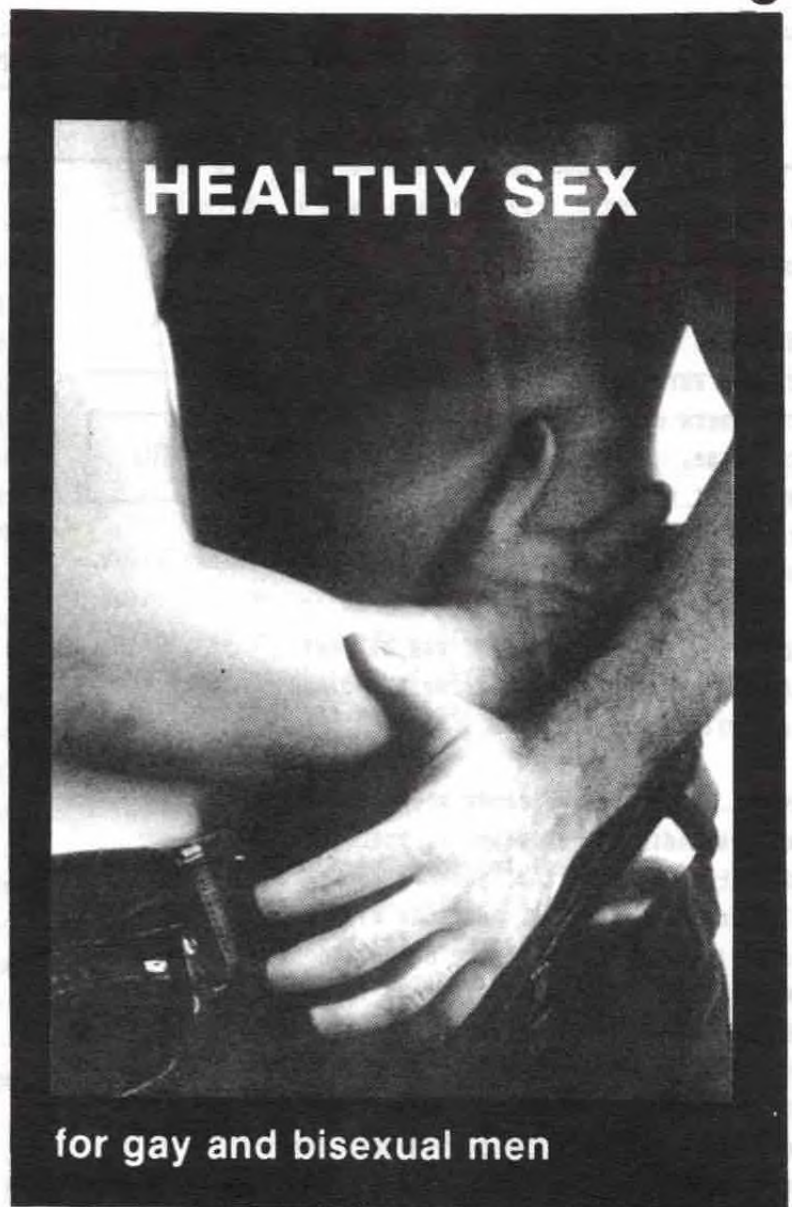
After five months of development, ACT-B has published our first self produced brochure. As part of an overall review of our services to the gay community, we identified a blank spot in available AIDS education literature.

The brochure we have created is a "second generation" leaflet. First generation material gives general information about AIDS and usually contains prevention methodology. "Second generation" education material moves toward supporting changed behavior, while reinforcing basic information.

Our brochure, titled "HEALTHY SEX FOR GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN" is targeted specifically toward the gay community. It is not for general distribution. Its primary focus is prevention of AIDS transmission in gay and bisexual males. This is the population group that continues to account for the greatest number of diagnosed AIDS cases. The secondary focus of the brochure is to combat the sex negative and homophobic messages that have been aimed at the gay community.

The brochure was officially launched at a Gays of Thunder Bay dance on September 10th.

Complimentary copies of the brochure have been sent to member organizations of the Ontario AIDS Network and the Canadian AIDS Society.



...cover of new ACT-B brochure.

AIDS *Information* PHONELINE

345-7233



AIDS COMMITTEE of THUNDER BAY



1. *Can I get AIDS from a public swimming pool?*

No. The virus thought to cause AIDS cannot survive exposure to soap, bleach, cleansers and similar agents, such as chlorine. Chlorine is used to keep the water of swimming pools free of many types of bacteria and other elements which could be harmful to bathers.

2. *I'm a 14-year old girl and my best friend contracted AIDS through a blood transfusion. What can I do?*

A lot. Your friend needs your understanding, your support, your love. She needs to know that you're there to listen and be caring. Persons with AIDS (PWAs) often feel deserted and abandoned when they tell their family and friends of their diagnosis. At a time when many of them are entitled to support, they find their relationships damaged, if not destroyed. One of the proven ways why many PWAs have been living longer - and better - is the quality of human relationships they are able to enjoy while dealing with AIDS.

3. *How do I know which brand of condom will give me optimum protection?*

Using the right kind of condom, and using it properly, is essential to safer sex. But as long as you use latex condoms, specific brands or makes don't matter that much. Never use condoms made out of animal membrane; their texture is uneven and that could allow the AIDS virus to cross the condom barrier. Latex condoms are electronically tested for resilience.

The material is strong and can be designed to incorporate features many people find appealing: different textures such as ribbing, colours, even tastes. There are snug-fitting condoms, lubricated and dry ones. The best way to find out which condom suits your style, personality, mood and physical requirements is to try out a number of different kinds. Also use water-based lubricants, particularly brands that include nonoxynol-9 as an ingredient. Nonoxynol-9 is a spermicide which effectively kills the AIDS virus. It affords an extra measure of protection. Condoms are now readily available in most drug stores. Remember that condoms are manufactured and packed with lot numbers clearly marked. Should you discover a fault, you can contact the manufacturer.

4. *Will the blood test for antibodies to the HIV virus tell me if I've got AIDS?*

No. Although the blood test is a fairly reliable way of determining the presence of antibodies to HIV it does not tell a person who tests seropositive whether they will go on to develop AIDS. In fact, the test cannot really inform the person that they have the so-called AIDS virus at all.

AIDS AWARENESS WEEK

IN ONTARIO

**LIVING
WITH
AIDS**

SEMAINE DE SENSIBILISATION

AU SIDA EN ONTARIO

**VIVRE
AVEC LE
SIDA**

OCTOBER 17 - 23, 1988

DU 17 AU 23 OCTOBRE 1988

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

ReACT-Believe regularly features profiles on ACT-B's volunteers. We're pleased to present Roberta, one of our hardest working volunteers, to you:

Q. Roberta, why did you come to ACT-B?

A. "Because I was going to do volunteer work and I happened to see ACT-B's announcement on Maclean-Hunter Cable TV. I thought that people who make a commitment to work in AIDS would be really conscientious people to work with."

Q. Have you found that to be the case?

A. "Yes. I like the people in the office".
(We like you too, Roberta.)

Q. What have you done here, besides staff the phoneline?

A. "Computer training - and I love it. I've always been afraid of computers, but now I'm not. That's my reward here."

Q. What's been the most memorable experience on the phone?

A. "The most touching moment was when a 13 or 14 year old girl phoned. A friend of hers had apparently contracted AIDS through a blood transfusion, and she wanted to know how to talk to her friend."

Q. What did you tell her?

A. "I asked her about the nature of their friendship and then advised her to be loving and caring, to allow her friend to talk when she wanted to and not to be afraid." Q. Roberta, I think you do other volunteer work as well, don't you? Q. "I've had teenage runaways stay at my place until they've straightened themselves out. Also, kids who've been kicked out of their homes. I've also taken in kids who have alcohol or drug problems."

Q. Where do you see ACT-B going?

A. "I see it as a vital part of the community: it has an important function to play for education and awareness. I think it's really the only place people can go."

Q. What are your interests, your hobbies?

A. "Reading. I'm an avid reader. I read a lot of self-help books, but I'm also a big fan of horror stories. Horror movies too. I like Steven King a lot!"

DRY KISSES and STIFF KICKS

Every issue of ReACT-Believe features awards in the categories of *DRY KISSES* (nice) and *STIFF KICKS* (not nice), to people and organizations involved with AIDS. Readers can nominate their own candidates for either award.

In this issue of ReACT-believe, our *Dry Kiss* award goes to the ONTARIO AIDS NETWORK, for having the foresight to have AIDS Awareness Week declared a province-wide event in 1988.

And two *Stiff Kicks* this month, one to the B.C. government - AGAIN! - for its continued refusal to fund community-based AIDS organizations (AIDS Vancouver and AIDS Vancouver Island), and to the Quebec government for grossly underfunding C-SAM, the major AIDS organization in that province.

Copy deadline for the Winter issue of ReACT-Believe is December 30, 1988.

The Editor will consider all submissions. The opinions expressed in ReACT-Believe are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the policy of the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay.

MONDAY OCTOBER 17

SUNDAY OCTOBER 16

PRESENTATION:
Indian Friendship
Centre
Satellite Office
704 McKenzie St.

7:00 PM

BALLOON LAUNCH:
Hillcrest Park

12:00 Noon

KEYNOTE EVENT
"Living With
AIDS" Panel:
Dr. Ian Mackie
Dr. Stuart Holtby
Family Members
Ramada Inn/Prince
Arthur Hotel

8:00 PM

TUESDAY OCTOBER 18

**FACULTY AND
STUDENT FORUM**
"Living With
AIDS" Panel
Confederation
College Lecture
Theatre

10:00 AM

VIDEO NIGHT
Families Welcome
Waverley Resource
Library

7:30 PM

**AIDS AWARENESS
WEEK**

OCTOBER 16-22, 1988

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 19

**SAFER SEX
WORKSHOP for
HETEROSEXUAL
L.U. Centre
Theatre**

2:30 PM

**SAFER SEX
WORKSHOP for
GAY & BISEXUAL
MEN**
203 Ogden St.

7:30 PM

**PRESENTATION
POUR LA
COMMUNAUTE
FRANCOPHONE**
Ecole
Franco-sud
2645 Donald

7:30 PM

**FRIDAY
OCTOBER 21**

**HEALTHY SEX
CABARET:**
Little Finn
Hall
316 Bay St.

8:00 PM

**SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 12**

**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 20**

**CANDLELIGHT
VIGIL:** assemble
at 283 Bay St.
silent walk to
Unitarian Church
for ceremony

7:00 PM

**AIDS IN THE
WORKPLACE FORUM:**
Thunder Bay
District Health
Unit
999 Balmoral St.

7:30 PM

**AIDS AWARENESS
EXTRA EVENT:**
Outreach to the
Deaf Community

Co-sponsored by
Thunder Bay Centre
For The Deaf,
Canadian Hearing
Society and
AIDS Committee of
Thunder Bay

THEME: LIVING WITH AIDS

CONFRONTING AIDS

Never too young *'I thought it couldn't happen too me'*

I thought I knew about safe sex. I thought it wouldn't happen to me.

I was wrong. It *did* happen to me. I took the confidential AIDS test at Hassle Free Clinic and I was told that I'm HIV-positive.

What does being HIV-positive mean?

According to one recent study reported in the *Globe and Mail* on Mar 31, 1988, being HIV-positive means that "unless an effective treatment is found, most people exposed to the AIDS virus will develop the disease within nine years." And according to the controversial Surgeon General of the US, we may never find an effective treatment for AIDS, at least not in the foreseeable future.

What does being HIV-positive mean to me personally?

It means that I may have nine years of fairly good health left or I may only have a few. Regardless, I'll probably develop full-blown AIDS before I'm 30 years old.

Being HIV-positive means that I can pass on the virus to other people through my blood, blood products and semen.

Most of all, though, it means that I am afraid. I'm afraid that I'll pass on the virus to my lover, I'm afraid I may get sick soon and I'm afraid other people might discriminate against me or reject me when they find out.

Something that makes me feel worse is that I know I'm not alone. In an article dated Apr 19, 1988, the *Toronto Star* reported that US teenagers ignore advice on safe sex. The article quoted a study of 300 teenagers in San Francisco (one of the cities hit hardest by AIDS in North America) which found that only 2 percent of sexually active girls and 8 percent of sexually active boys used condoms every time they had intercourse.

I use condoms. All the time, now. But, when I first came out in 1985, my lover told me that as long as he didn't come inside me ass-fucking was safe. I trusted him, and, even after we broke up, I occasionally let guys fuck me without a condom, as long as they didn't come inside of my ass.

I found out the hard way that un-

protected anal intercourse, even when his cock is withdrawn before climax, is unsafe.

I want to tell other youth, be they lesbian, gay or straight, not to make the same mistakes I made. Read up on safe sex and practice it. If you want to talk to someone call the AIDS Committee of Toronto Hotline at 926-1626 or call the Lesbian and Gay Youth Phonenumber, Friday and Saturday nights from 7-10pm at 591-6749.

I'm a member of Lesbian and Gay Youth Toronto, but I think it's important to say that I could be anyone, anywhere. I look as healthy as everyone else and I feel fine for now—but for how long, I don't know.

I would like to sign my name to this article because I feel it's important to put a face to AIDS, but I'm holding off from doing that for now.

Reprinted with permission from Pink Inc, the newsletter of Lesbian and Gay Youth Toronto.

LONG TERM SURVIVORS

by Michael Callen

Michael Callen (PWA Coalition in New York) found these qualities in the 17 long-term survivors he interviewed.

1. All of them had dabbled in alternative approaches. With KS, (Kaposi's Sarcoma, a cancer occurring frequently among PWAs, Ed.Note) there were several striking stories of success with macrobiotic or vegetarian diets. About half of the long-term survivors had made major diet changes. The rest paid more attention to their diets.

2. Most or all had used approaches such as shiatsu massage, acupuncture, or visualization. A clear majority were involved with groups such as Louise Hay, or AIDS Mastery or Metaphysical Alliance.

3. All but two found solace in religion - about half in the religion of their childhood. Others did not seek organized religion, but spoke of spirituality, or a sense of oneness. None became Bible-thumping fundamentalists. All who did become involved in churches were critical of some aspects of organized religion.

4. All said they needed hope to survive. Each had to deal in some way with the media's repeated message that everyone who develops AIDS dies. Some found it important to know survivors; many knew each other. All but two are aggressively involved in the AIDS movement, or working with PWAs; many are in the forefront.

5. They are fighters, often difficult patients, not passive. Most used a group of physicians to coordinate their care, not just one. A majority have fired a physician, or ordered one out of their hospital room.

6. Several had moving, near-death experiences.

7. There was no magic bullet, no single treatment used by all the survivors. Not all of them used lipids, or macrobiotics, or ribavirin, or anything else. Their experience suggests that AIDS is not one disease, with one substance that will work for everyone.

Reprinted from Healing AIDS,
Vol. 3, No. 5, p. 1.

(Thanks to AIDS Regina Newsletter,
Summer, 1988)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING November 23, 1988

The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay will hold its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, November 23, 1988.

The meeting will see the election of a new slate of Directors to the Board. As of this writing, nominations for directors of ACT-B are open. If you are interested in serving as a board member or if you would like to nominate someone, get in touch with the office at 345-1516.

Candidates for election to the ACT-B Board must be members in good standing of the organization.

The venue and starting time for the AGM will be announced later.

READERSHIP SURVEY

We would like to know what you think of ReACT-Believe, the ACT-B newsletter. Please take a moment to fill out this short survey. Results will help us serve you better. Clip the survey and return to: ACT-B, P.O. Box 3586, THUNDER BAY, Ontario, P7B 6B2

1. What do you think of the content, generally? (Please circle one)

GREAT! OK NEEDS WORK

2. Please rate the following features with # 1 being "most favourite":

Column(s)

News Stories

Volunteer Profile

Cartoons

Other

3. Did you find any stories, headlines or illustrations offensive? If so, which ones?

4. What would you like to see in future issues of the ACT-B newsletter?

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US MAKE OUR NEWSLETTER A BETTER COMMUNICATION TOOL!

MEET YOUR BOARD

Currently at its full complement of 12 members, the Board of Directors of the AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay is responsible for creating policy, approving programs and projects initiated by staff, and engaging in long-range planning.

Directors:

David Belrose: A letter carrier, he has been president of ACT-B since its founding.

Marie Portier: Vice-President, is a student and child care worker.

Michael Chan: Treasurer, an occupational therapist and also a co-founder of ACT-B.

Dr. Frederick R. Ball: Microbiologist and director of the Ontario Public Health Laboratory in Thunder Bay.

Darlene Binette: Coordinator of the Community AIDS Program for the District Health Unit.

Diane Britton: Coordinator of the Sexually Transmitted Diseases Clinic at the District Health Unit.

Douglas Broman: Also a co-founder of ACT-B, a printer and graphic designer.

Andre Chamberlain: Chemical dependency counsellor for youth.

Karen Maki-Raitsakas: Community activist with organizations such as Planned Parenthood and the Canadian Mental Health Association.

The Rev. Chris Morden: The latest addition to the Board, Chris is an Anglican clergyman with a special interest in

ministering to persons with AIDS.

The Rev. Jack Patterson: Minister of Trinity United Church in Thunder Bay.

Deb White: A newer Board member, Deb is a pharmacist at Hogarth-Westmount Hospital.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

A Column by Michael Sobota

STATISTICS, SPECULATION AND SPIRITUALITY

One of the most frequent questions we get asked is "how many people are there with AIDS in Thunder Bay"? It's a question that is not simple to answer.

It's useful to look at what may be behind the question. Despite all of the information available, AIDS remains a difficult and tricky subject to understand. People want hard and clear information. People want to feel safe. If there is a low number of official persons with AIDS in Thunder Bay, that might make people feel safer than, say there were a hundred diagnosed cases here.

I believe there is another way to answer the question than just statistical numbers, a way that helps me live with the fears and concerns about AIDS in our community. I have three points I'd like to make here:

1. It is crucial to understand that AIDS is here. There are still people who think that we are not like Toronto or other large Canadian cities, that somehow our isolation protects us. This couldn't be further from the truth.

2. People get AIDS, not statistics. The people who have died, or those in the care of their physicians, or those working in other ways to live with AIDS are people: not numbers. They could be your brother or sister, your next door neighbor, your doctor, your son, your lover. They are the "living faces of AIDS" and as such deserve the best of our human responses: support, compassion, encouragement.

3. We are all living with AIDS. That is the theme chosen for the province wide AIDS Awareness Week. The week is designated October 16-22 in Ontario. It pulls into focus what we have been experiencing for many years now: all of us, our community has been living with AIDS. The week will highlight certain aspects of this, including an opportunity to remember those individuals who have died from AIDS, as well as to honour and show our respect for those who are living and working with AIDS on a daily basis. This will take place at the Candlelight Vigil, Thursday evening, September 20th.

So how many people are affected by AIDS in Thunder Bay? In truth, we all are. Let us be kind to one another.

HAVE YOU BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BECAUSE OF THE FEAR OF AIDS?

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association is conducting a **CANADA-WIDE STUDY** of the extent of unfair discrimination against persons with AIDS, or persons perceived to be infectious.

Maybe you have suffered such discrimination, but because of fear of further discrimination, or the belief that nothing can be done, you haven't told anyone. Or maybe you have tried to do something about it, to no avail.

We are most concerned about discrimination in: housing, education, employment, health care and public services.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Please write us at:
518-119 West Pender St., Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1S5
Or call us collect at:
(604) 687-2919



Sponsored by the B.C. Civil Liberties Association
with assistance from
the Department of the Secretary of State

YOUR ANONYMITY WILL BE STRICTLY PROTECTED

SAFER SEX WORKSHOP

During AIDS AWARENESS WEEK, there will be a Safer Sex Workshop for gay and bisexual men. Wednesday, October 19. The workshop will be held at 203 Ogden Street ("the usual Fort William Location").

The workshop is casual and uses a discussion format. There is not any sexual activity in the workshop, but rather a relaxed and confidential atmosphere to talk about sex and any fears or concerns about AIDS.

The workshop focuses on helping gay men and bisexuals to be positive about sex, while understanding changes in sexual behavior to protect themselves from getting or giving AIDS.

Last year's workshop was received enthusiastically by the men who attended. Everything that occurs in the workshop is confidential, to assure a safe, non-threatening atmosphere.

The workshop begins at 7:30 and will last approximately 3 hours.

Recent additions to our RESOURCE LIBRARY:

ADVICE FOR LIFE: A Woman's Guide
to AIDS, Risks and Prevention
by Chris Norwood

SOMEONE WAS HERE: Profiles in the
AIDS Epidemic
by George Whitmore

AIDS AND THE HEALER WITHIN
by Nick Bamforth

AIDS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

AIDS: A SELF CARE MANUAL
by the AIDS Project Los Angeles

THE QUILT: Stories From The Names
Project

LIVING WITH AIDS
by Tom O'Connor and Ahmed
Conzalez-Nunez

The AIDS Committee of Thunder Bay provides a wide range of services:

- *speakers* for educational presentations
- a *library* of brochures, books, pamphlets, clippings and videos
- confidential one-on-one *counselling*
- the *AIDS Information Phonenumber*
- *in-service sessions* for professional groups.

ACT-B maintains links with the medical and health care organizations in Thunder Bay. The Committee is a member of the Ontario AIDS Network and the Canadian AIDS Society/ La Societe canadienne du SIDA.

CANADIAN
AIDS
SOCIETY



LA SOCIÉTÉ
CANADIENNE
DU SIDA