

February 7, 2025

Dear OAN Members, Community, and Partners,

The Ontario AIDS Network, with support from the Anti-Black Racism Working Group, is honored to recognize National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day as a vital opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to addressing the unique and systemic inequities faced by African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) communities in the response to HIV/AIDS. This day serves as a reminder of the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on ACB Canadians and the urgent need for action. This day also provides a vital opportunity to celebrate the strength and resilience of ACB communities and renew our commitment to advancing and advocating for justice, equity, and dignity in healthcare.

Systemic inequities in healthcare, deeply rooted in anti-Black racism, have perpetuated higher rates of HIV infection, disparities in access to care, and poorer health outcomes among ACB individuals. Despite being disproportionately called upon to participate in medical research and clinical trials that have shaped HIV treatment advancements, many Black individuals continue to face barriers when it comes to accessing the very medications and services, they have helped make possible. Structural anti-Black racism also impacts access to employment, housing, and food security, while ACB communities are disproportionately criminalized, incarcerated, and racially profiled. These factors intersect to significantly reduce equitable health outcomes and health justice for ACB communities.

At OAN, we stand in solidarity with ACB individuals. Below are calls to action we recommend for moving forward towards health equity and justice.

1. **Education and Learning** – Learn about the systemic racism and health inequities that disproportionately impact ACB communities. Educate yourself on the disparities in access to culturally safe and responsive healthcare and their effects on health outcomes. For further insight, visit [the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network's report on health inequities](#).
2. **Advocacy** – Advocate for collecting and using health data stratified by race to uncover and address disparities in healthcare access and outcomes for ACB communities. Ask for resources, policies, and practices that remove barriers to care and create accountability for health justice within the healthcare system.

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3. **Amplify Voices and Lived Experiences** – Center the voices of ACB communities in decision-making spaces, ensuring their lived experiences inform programs, policies, and research. Foster environments that challenge stigma, discrimination, and harmful stereotypes. Explore resources from [ACCHO's African, Caribbean, and Black Resource Hub](#) to learn more. Additionally, the [Black Health Alliance](#) provides tools and initiatives to address systemic barriers and uplift the voices of ACB communities across Canada.

Together, let us work toward a future where ACB individuals living with or affected by HIV can access the care, support, and respect they deserve. By addressing systemic anti-Black racism, we can make significant progress toward 95-95-95 goals and the ultimate objective of getting to zero new infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths. Every action we take brings us closer to ending the HIV epidemic and fostering thriving, equitable communities.

Please visit our dedicated hub on our website, where we will be updating the page throughout the month with relevant information and resources in support of recognizing National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day at: [www.ontarioaidsnetwork.ca](http://www.ontarioaidsnetwork.ca)



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