



Frequently Asked Questions

Focus: Transition of the primary responsibility of gay men's health programming funding (including the services offered by Gayway) from AIDS Vancouver (AV) to the Health Initiative for Men (HIM).

AIDS Vancouver FAQs for Staff/Board

RE: Transition of the primary responsibility of gay men's health programming funding (including the services offered by Gayway) from AIDS Vancouver (AV) to the Health Initiative for Men (HIM).

FAQs for Staff and Board

Q: Will AIDS Vancouver still be providing prevention services?

A: Yes. AV will be providing prevention education workshops and awareness campaigns which will focus on testing for at risk populations (depending on the outcome of VCH decision).

Q: Will AIDS Vancouver still provide it's very successful case management and support programs?

A: Yes. AV will continue to provide its very successful and respected client services for people who are HIV+, including gay and other men who have sex with men who are living with HIV.

Q: Will AV be collaborating with HIM?

A: Yes. AV will also be collaborating with any number of community partners when it's appropriate including HIM to ensure that AV continues to respond to the needs of men who have sex with men.

Q: How many jobs will be lost at AV?

A: At this time approximately 6-8 positions will be affected by this change including both management and bargaining unit.

Q: Does the board support the transition of MSM and Prevention (including Gayway) services to HIM?

A: Yes. The AV board worked in collaboration with the board of HIM to realize the transition. The AV board had the best interests of the MSM and gay men's communities at heart and felt that MSM and gay men's health needs could be best met through a comprehensive and integrated approach as HIM presented.

Q: Does our funder, VCH, support this transition?

A: Yes. The transition was accomplished with the support of VCH.

Q: Are other programs and services at AV going to be transitioned to other organizations?

A: No. AIDS Vancouver has a much lauded and supported case management/support program, Helpline, newly revised website (www.aidsvancouver.org) and a library that has the most complete HIV/AIDS

resource collection in Western Canada. These are the hallmarks of AIDS Vancouver.

Q: Will the revamped prevention/education program still use volunteers?

A: Yes. Volunteers are a critical part of the delivery of all AV's programs and services and this will continue.

Q: What will happen to the Gayway volunteers?

A: Gayway volunteers will be given the opportunity to meet with the Interim Executive Director to discuss the changes and each Gayway volunteer will be sent information about HIM in order for them to be given the opportunity to connect with this new organization.

Q: Is AIDS Vancouver abandoning gay men?

A: Not at all. AIDS Vancouver will continue to provide a range of services to gay men who are HIV positive, including support services and case management.

Also, AIDS Vancouver, through the new Education Worker position, will work closely with HIM on a number of existing and new projects.

Testing will be the new focus of the education/prevention team and outreach to gay men will be a significant part of the work the department does.

Q: Why doesn't AIDS Vancouver see gay men as a priority?

A: AV does see gay men as a priority, so much so, that AV, based on solid research, is willing to try an approach that is very different from what has been done for the last 25 years. With 50% of new infections in Vancouver attributed to men who have sex with men, a situation that is simply not acceptable, we as a community are obligated to try and address this serious issue with a new approach. HIV is a complex disease and developing prevention programming that addresses and acknowledges these complexities is critical.

Gayway, a project of AIDS Vancouver, was developed as a gay men's resource exchange and was designed to encourage gay men to share their knowledge, experience and resources and was a significant step forward in addressing the health needs of gay and other men who have sex with men in Vancouver.

The agreement to transition the primary responsibility of gay men's health programming, including the services offered by Gayway, from AIDS Vancouver to the Health Initiative for Men represents another significant step forward in addressing the health needs of gay and other men who have sex with men.

AIDS Vancouver will continue to provide support services and case management to gay men living with HIV and the prevention/education team, through the Education Worker position, will work closely with HIM to foster a strong and collaborative relationship.

Q: What about the past 25 years and the work we've done with gay men?

A: 25 years ago AIDS Vancouver was created to meet the challenges that gay men were facing from an emerging disease, a disease that was having a significant impact on the gay community. The important work done over the last 25 years with gay men, and the gay community as a whole, is largely responsible for the foundation that AIDS Vancouver is built on.

As the HIV epidemic began to change, affecting a broader range of people, AIDS Vancouver evolved to meet the challenges and needs of all people living with, or at risk for contracting, HIV.

Q: What's the difference between Gayway and HIM?

A: While there are similarities between the services that Gayway was providing and the services that HIM is proposed to provide there are also some differences and HIM aims to provide a concept of health for gay men that includes social, physical, mental, and spiritual aspects.

The creation of Gayway was a significant step forward in addressing the overall health needs of gay and other men who have sex with men, and HIM represents another step forward in this evolution.

Q: Will AIDS Vancouver still provide support services to HIV positive gay men?

A: Yes. AV will continue to provide client services for all people who are HIV positive, including gay and other men who have sex with men.

Q: What's the status of the transition right now?

A: This transition is a complex process for both for AV and HIM. AV must begin the process to ramp down programming, as well as address the issues that are involved with a ramp down, and HIM must ramp up programming along with addressing the inherent issues with that process. Both organizations are working with Vancouver Coastal Health to ensure that programming is minimally affected, but service will be affected to a small degree. Over the coming weeks you will begin to see new initiatives and new programming begin.

Q: In terms of services and more specifically prevention, what kind of interventions will AIDS Vancouver focus on?

A: AIDS Vancouver's prevention/education team will target at-risk populations with a primary focus on testing. Testing will be used as the entry point to initiate a range of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies.

Q: Will AIDS Vancouver still work on HIV prevention with gay men?

A: Yes. The focus of our revised prevention/education department will be on testing, and testing will be used as the entry point to initiate a range of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies. Also, the new Education Worker

position will work closely with HIM to foster a strong and collaborative working relationship, including working on Vick Vancouver (on-line initiative), national men's awareness campaigns, targeted local workshops and the Gay Men's Health Summit, as well as new HIV prevention initiatives developed in partnership.

Q: When did Gayway cease all operations?

A: AV stopped providing direct services through the Gayway program on May 31, 2008. HIM may continue to use some Gayway materials and programs into the future, in partnership with AV. Gayway may not stop operating, but who is managing Gayway has changed and that responsibility has been shifted to HIM.

Q: Will Gayway still exist in the same form in the future?

A: No. The services that Gayway offered will now be provided by HIM. Gayway, as a program of AIDS Vancouver, will no longer exist.

Q: What services will HIM offer?

A: The mandate of the Health Initiative for Men (HIM) is to strengthen the health and wellness of gay men and other men who have sex with men in British Columbia through education, support, and community development. One of the organization's primary objectives is to reduce the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. For programming information please visit the HIM website at www.checkhimout.ca