

Backgrounder

AIDS Vancouver Island

AIDS VANCOUVER ISLAND'S CURRENT FUNDING CRISIS

- AIDS Vancouver Island (AVI) is presently negotiating with its principal funder, the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), after VIHA announced on January 11, 2007, a new funding model for HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C prevention and support services. The new model, if deployed, will reduce south island resources to AIDS Vancouver Island and partner agencies by 37.5 per cent (\$450K).
 - On January 29, 2007, the Downtown Service Providers Committee (DSPC) held a press conference to address the funding cut and demanding a commitment to restore the funding. On this same day, VIHA offered one-year transition funding to the 3 affected Victoria-based organizations. Negotiations are ongoing.
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AIDS VANCOUVER ISLAND'S PROGRAM AND SERVICE OVERVIEW

- AIDS Vancouver Island (AVI) is a community-based AIDS service organization. AVI has provided harm reduction services and HIV/AIDS prevention and support programs in Vancouver Island communities since it was founded and registered as a charitable organization twenty years ago (1986).
- In 2003, AVI added hepatitis C prevention and education to its mandate, although no additional funding was allocated by the agency's funders for these additional responsibilities.
- After establishing a core service base in southern and central Vancouver Island, AVI responded to a request by VIHA in 2003 to assume responsibility for service delivery in the north island region. AVI now operates service offices in Greater Victoria, Nanaimo, Courtenay, Campbell River and Port Hardy in addition to a mobile needle exchange service in the Cowichan Valley. AVI's service responsibilities also include the Gulf Islands.
- AVI has managed one of the Canada's longest-running needle exchange programs since 1989. The program provides needle exchange, health promotion and harm reduction information. This important service opens doors for clients to access the organization's education, support, and advocacy services for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C and other communicable diseases.
- AVI is respected by funders and peers for its ability to develop targeted and innovative interventions designed to prevent the transmission of HIV and HCV and to ensure healthier outcomes for its clients. AVI continually adapts its programs and services to changing demographics of HIV and HCV infections, and increasingly, HIV/HCV coinfection. In recent years, injection drug users, aboriginal people, women and youth are at special risk of contracting HIV infection and AVI has responded accordingly.
- AVI staff are responding to epidemiological shifts by providing increased outreach to vulnerable environments, from prisons to the street, among men who have sex with men, queer youth, intravenous drug users, the homeless, aboriginal people and women.



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