



LE GROUPE D'ACTION-SIDA

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Media Release

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For Immediate Release

Activists to Deliver Report to Cabinet Meeting

Ontario Report Says AIDS Drug Funding The Priority Issue

AIDS activists will attempt to deliver a new Ministry of Health report to an Ontario Cabinet meeting tomorrow (Monday, March 7).

The report, commissioned by the Ontario Ministry of Health, identifies funding for treatments as the most important need of people living with HIV and AIDS across Ontario.

"This report provides clear evidence and clear direction for Bob Rae's government," said AIDS ACTION NOW! spokesperson Tim McCaskell. "We want to make sure this issue is addressed by the Cabinet this week."

The report, titled The Service and Support Needs of Individuals Infected and Affected by HIV/AIDS, is a result of an extensive needs assessment across Ontario. The report was scheduled to be released later in the week. AIDS ACTION NOW! is releasing it early in an attempt to influence Monday's meeting of the Policy and Priorities committee of Cabinet.

Over two years after then Health Minister Frances Lankin promised to develop a new drug program and acknowledged the "growing pressure to develop a catastrophic drug policy", no policy has been announced. Meanwhile, many people living with AIDS or HIV are unable to afford critical treatment options. The problem of drug cost has become more acute every month as new and expensive vital treatments are discovered and licensed.

A strategic plan for AIDS and HIV released by Health Minister Ruth Grier in December, 1993 also identified drug funding as an immediate priority.

"The consensus is clear," said McCaskell. "We need a catastrophic drug policy that provides a drug plan to everyone with life-threatening illnesses, and we need a plan that covers the full range of treatments people need."

AIDS ACTION NOW! will release the new report at a press conference at **2:00 p.m.** on **Monday, March 7, 1994** in the **Queen's Park Media Centre**. Activists will then attempt to deliver copies of the report to the **Cabinet Committee on Policy and Priorities** meeting in the same building. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 2:30 p.m.

For more information contact:

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