



LE GROUPE D'ACTION-SIDA

# AIDS ACTION NOW!

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## Steering Committee Minutes (October 26, 1993)

### Present:

Debi Brock	Bob Gardner	Linda Gardner
Bill Leeming	Darien Taylor	Mark Freamo
Susan Kasurak	Wayne Hellard	Lucy McSweeney
Glen Brown	Tim McCaskell	Brent Southen
Peter Amenta	David Chu	

1. Minutes of September 28 were reviewed and accepted.
2. Policy Discussion: Income and HIV (Glen Brown and Mark Freamo)

AIDS is an economic problem as well as a medical problem. In addition to issues of discrimination in housing and employment, the health of PLWA/HIVs is tied into affordable living. PLWA/HIVs have suffered from recent cut-backs in health care and there is little hope of a resumption of these services in the near future. The situation is made even more dire because of increasing numbers of new HIV infections and increasing numbers of individuals progressing to AIDS.

Mark Freamo spoke about new reforms to existing social services and the replacement of the Family Benefits Allowance by a new Ontario Adults Benefit. Under both the old system and the new system you need to develop full-blown AIDS in order to receive benefits. It is noteworthy that individuals' relative standard of living has declined disastrously on FBA. The increasing marginalization experienced by these individuals can only grow more desperate as more sick and disabled become unemployable.

In the past, PWA Foundation has been helping to bridge the needs of PLWA's while they are waiting for FBA and welfare benefits. Currently the government is planning changes to social assistance which include taking monies earmarked for disabilities. Representatives from ARCH believe this will result in administrative reforms which may see PWA Foundation programming combined with that of the FBA.

There is a great need for AAN! to coalition with other disability groups to fight these changes to social assistance. We need to explore the possibility of a guaranteed minimum income for the disabled. One immediate issue to address may concern the government compensation packages for Canadian haemophiliacs: If the government is willing to acknowledge the needs of HIV+ haemophiliacs, it should, in all fairness, acknowledge the needs of all HIV+ individuals. Mark Freamo warned, however, against public mobilization on this issue for fear of alarming individuals already on social assistance. He argued that it would be more beneficial to put the effort into coalition building. Glen Brown suggested that AAN! might look into the extent to which people are having to give up their life insurances in order to receive FBA benefits.

Mark will continue to examine issues concerning social assistance reform. He is currently drafting a position paper for AAN! and ARCH.

3. **Current Issues:**

- a. Insurance Forum - ARCH
- b. Speakers' Forum on HIV Treatment Strategies

**Insurance Forum** -- ARCH wants to put together a forum on insurance issues and disabilities. AAN! has expressed interest in participating.

**Speakers' Forum** -- PWA, ACT treatment-wellness, and Suppliments-Plus is organizing a speakers' forum on complementary therapies. Featured speakers will include Dr. Larkland, Dr. Jessen, Dr. Behari, Dr. McFadden and Chester Myers. *AAN! has been asked to co-sponsor and will contribute to the advertising of this event.*

4. **Other Business**

**Next Policy Discussion** -- November -- "The Walk and other people we take money from."

**Assault Charge** -- A 21 year old Toronto man is attempting to lay charges against a man that he alleges infected him. He has taken his complaint to the Metro police. Glen Brown will address this issue on CITY TV next week and deliver the message that if people are having unprotected sex, they must be prepared to take the consequences for their own actions. Glen will take the opportunity to promote safe-sex.

**HOOD** -- A replacement for John Brough is required for the HOOD hiring committee.

**Alternative Walk-For-AIDS** -- (This is different from the Counter-Walk project.) The group produced stickers and pamphlets to inform the Toronto public about the controversy surrounding the SUN sponsorship.

**Bill 89** -- Glen Brown and Brent Southern will address the legislature about the need to observe universal precautions by all provincial service providers. Glen and Brent will argue that Bill 89 serves no other purpose than to conceal this fact.

**AGM** -- November 16

**Demos on Drug Funding** -- November 27 and December 1.

**HIV+ Women's Forum** -- October 29.