

**Ross H. Haynes  
President -- AIDS Nova Scotia  
5675 Spring Garden Road  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
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August 17, 1994

Mr. Lorne Izzard  
Black Outreach Project  
5675 Spring Garden Road  
Halifax, NS B3J 1H1

Dear Lorne and Participants in the Black Outreach Project:

On Tuesday, August 16, 1994, I received your letter, Lorne, addressed to the Board of Directors at AIDS Nova Scotia. Obviously, someone has reported comments to you that were exchanged at the joint meeting of AIDS Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Persons with AIDS Coalition that, in part, touched upon the activities of the Black Outreach Project. It has been suggested to you that these comments were racist in nature. This is both an unfortunate report and an entirely inaccurate one, I can assure you. The idea that a rumor is circulating which accuses members of AIDS Nova Scotia and probably myself personally of having made racist remarks is of concern to both you and myself.

What I can tell you, Lorne, is that there has always been a concern at AIDS Nova Scotia that the funding process of the federal government which creates "community based activities" is flawed. Unfortunately, instead of responding to AIDS as a broad based community health problem, the federal government has chosen to deal with AIDS on a "piece meal basis," attempting to identify specific communities that should receive assistance and information. I have personally expressed this view, not only about the Black Outreach Project, but also about the Men's Project, the Women's Project, and other similar projects that are currently being funded in the region.

I recognize that people can be very sensitive about any conversation that touches upon an activity in which they have an interest. Those sensitivities may be heightened when one community, in this case the Black community, has been subjected to discrimination and racism for many years. As a result of this, a person who is a member of that community might feel that any discussion by a group of white people could be interpreted to be racist. In any event, I can assure you that our comments and discussions were not racist in nature and that whomever is communicating this information to you is, in my opinion, sowing seeds of discord. Other members of AIDS Nova Scotia have read your letter and are alarmed that discussions have not only been carried out of the room, but also twisted to suit someone's agenda.

(2)

As I am sure you are aware, this weekend there is a retreat at Old Orchard Inn where all stakeholder groups in AIDS work in Nova Scotia are meeting to discuss the potential of joining together and consolidating their efforts into one voice. I know that the Black Outreach Project is expected to send participants. I hope there are two individuals in attendance so that a dialogue may be initiated on this issue. I know members of AIDS Nova Scotia would be delighted to speak with other people who are involved in the Black Outreach Project to confront these unfortunate accusations which have been spread by way of rumor and gossip.

I look forward to personally speaking with you about this in the near future. Please give me a call at my office (422-8400), or my home (827-4613) so that we have a chance to put this matter to rest.

Yours very truly,



Ross H. Haynes  
President, AIDS Nova Scotia

RHH/cn