



P A S A N

PRISONERS WITH AIDS / HIV SUPPORT ACTION NETWORK

P.O. BOX 87 689 QUEEN STREET WEST TORONTO ONTARIO M6J 1E6

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 4, 1991

PRISONERS WITH HIV/AIDS SUPPORT ACTION NETWORK (PASAN)

This announcement is to inform the community of the formation of a new group to advocate for Canadian prisoners with HIV/AIDS. We will highlight the problems prisoners with HIV/AIDS face within the prison system, examine the treatment they receive, and demand change. Our aim is to empower prisoners with HIV/AIDS to take control of their health and the decisions affecting their medical care.

We were profoundly affected by the lives and deaths of Michael Smith (1991) and Patrice O'Donnell (1990) PASAN acknowledges their work in the area of prisoners with AIDS and the inspiration they left us with. We have come together to carry on the work begun by these cherished friends.

We are AIDS activists, prisoners' rights activists, counsellors, and artists. All of us share a common concern for the lack of attention to issues around the health and human rights of those shrouded in invisibility inside Canada's prisons and jails. Prisoners are isolated, denied choice in treatment, abused by ignorance and lack of informed understanding, and prevented from receiving the support they need. Decent healthcare is a fundamental right of all Canadians - inside and outside of prison.

AIDS is the leading cause of death in the Canadian prison system. The epidemic must be dealt with humanely and comprehensively. PASAN demands:

- *full access to information about their condition and treatments for prisoners with HIV/AIDS
- *the right to choice of physician
- *the right to alternative treatments and therapy free of institutional control
- *preventative treatment including therapy for drug addiction
- *decent nutrition
- *the cessation of punitive responses including segregation and institutional violence
- *needle exchanges, bleach, condoms, dental dams and latex gloves inside prisons
- *programmes to educate prison staff and inmates about AIDS, to end homophobia and drug-user stereotypes
- *the reintroduction of HIV+ prisoners back into the prison population through active personal, medical, and psychological support
- *compassionate release of prisoners with AIDS including a support network on the outside

We call for input and support around these issues, and would like to see a federal network of groups, individuals, medical professionals, AIDS activists, social workers etc. who are willing to take action on these issues and to support Canadian prisoners with HIV/AIDS. We look forward to working together to change the system. By acting together we will put an end to the invisibility and isolation of prisoners with HIV/AIDS in Canada.

For more information contact:

PASAN
c/o **JULIA BARNETT**
P.O. BOX 87
689 QUEEN STREET WEST
TORONTO, ONTARIO
M6J 1E6