



2012 City of Toronto Budget: Analysis
Cuts to HIV/AIDS prevention programs

Issue:

- City of Toronto 2012 Budget^{1,2} outlines a proposal to reduce by 10% the funding to AIDS Prevention and Community Investment Program³.
- The AIDS Prevention Community Investment Program was established in 1987 with the goal of supporting community initiatives to prevent the spread of HIV. It supports strategic, targeted education programs to influence behaviours and situations that put people at risk of acquiring HIV, thus reducing HIV transmission. It particularly focuses on funding projects that address high-risk behaviours, enhance access to HIV/AIDS prevention education and address social barriers.⁴ It prioritizes projects that demonstrate evidence of need and implement prevention strategies that are supported by evidence.⁵
- The program funded 42 AIDS prevention projects in 2011. A 10% reduction will result in termination of the Global AIDS initiative and 2 fewer projects being funded overall.

Facts:

- HIV incidence remains unacceptably high in Toronto, with two Torontonians newly infected each day.⁶ More than 25% of new cases in Toronto are among people aged 30 or younger, who are often the target audience for the preventative programs funded by APCIP.
- Increased rates of HIV transmission can have significant impacts on individual patients, communities, and the healthcare system. People living with HIV/AIDS can face stigma, discrimination, employment insecurity, insecure housing or nutrition, social isolation, and significant medical complications over the course of their illness. People may be unable to work as a result of their illness, requiring disability or other social assistance. People living with HIV/AIDS will require more complex health care and social supports than their non-HIV infected counterparts, which places further strain on provincial and municipal health care and social support programs.⁷
- Community level HIV prevention programs are effective in reducing HIV transmission, and the subsequent health care costs associated with treating HIV/AIDS.⁸

Analysis:

- Decreasing funding to HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives may lead to further HIV transmission in Toronto. Even the *Analyst Notes* that accompany the proposal to make these cuts state that, “any further reductions in citywide HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives may contribute to increases in HIV transmission and other sexually transmitted infections.”²
- Termination of the Global AIDS Initiative not only decreases funding for programs like this, but sends a strong message about Toronto’s lack of commitment to HIV/AIDS prevention on a global scale. This is particularly disturbing during a time when the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria has cancelled its next round of funding. The termination of the Global AIDS initiative sends a clear message that the health of the most marginalized is not a priority, both within and outside of Toronto’s borders.

HPAP calls on Toronto City Council to make the healthy choice and stop the cuts to vital community programs!

¹ <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2011/bu/bgrd/backgroundfile-42560.pdf>

² http://www.toronto.ca/budget2012/pdf/op12_an_tph.pdf

³ <http://www.toronto.ca/health/aidsprevention/>

⁴ http://www.toronto.ca/health/aidsprevention/pdf/apcip_project_summaries.pdf

⁵ http://www.toronto.ca/health/aidsprevention/pdf/apcip_update.pdf

⁶ http://caseyhouse.akaraisin.com/ClientCustomFiles/Org_75/EventLocation_4001/CaseyHouseWhitePaper.pdf

⁷ http://caseyhouse.akaraisin.com/ClientCustomFiles/Org_75/EventLocation_4001/CaseyHouseWhitePaper.pdf, page 9

⁸ Valdeserri, R., Ogden, L. & McCray, E. (2003) Accomplishments in HIV prevention: implications for stemming the epidemic, *Nature Medicine*, 9, 881-886