

Roundtable Reflections

HIV/AIDS Roundtable, November 9, 2005

In order to strengthen communication and collaboration between British Columbia's Health Authorities and the Ministry of Health (MOH) on issues of HIV/AIDS the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) hosted a roundtable discussion on November 9, 2005. The day-long meeting took place in Vancouver at the BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre. High-level representatives from each Health Authority, the MOH, and the Centre of Excellence in HIV/AIDS and BC Centre for Disease Control were invited to the Roundtable. The goal of the session was described as follows:

- ⇒ To establish progress made with regard to the goals laid out in the Ministry of Health's *Priorities for Action in Managing the Epidemics: HIV/AIDS in BC (2003-2007)*,
- ⇒ To discuss provincial and regional roles and responsibilities relating to HIV/AIDS in B.C., and
- ⇒ To increase coordination and collaboration between Health Authorities on issues of HIV/AIDS.

Each Health Authority provided updates on progress made on HIV/AIDS service plans and identified issues/opportunities that need to be addressed. These summaries confirmed a number of issues:

1. Progress developing and implementing a fulsome and coordinated response to HIV/AIDS in individual Health Authorities varies significantly,
2. Each Health Authority has approached the issues quite differently, reflecting local issues,
3. There are some challenges establishing and maintaining HIV/AIDS as a priority in Health Authorities managing complex and often competing health care demands (i.e. wait lists, ER overcrowding, etc),
4. Health Authorities share many common concerns surrounding funding allocations for HIV services, and
5. Health Authorities and the MOH are enthusiastic about the opportunities to continue to share information and learn from each other.

In the afternoon, the group discussed provincial vs. regional roles. The argument was made for a model that would allow for strong leadership at the provincial level. This model would focus on three key issues:

1. Creating opportunities for collaboration and joint decision making,
2. Creating a forum for action (e.g. policy development and dissemination of best practices), and
3. Developing an atmosphere of accountability.

The discussion of regional roles focused on the delivery of service along the full continuum (e.g. chronic disease management, primary health care, residential care, acute symptom management) with individual Health Authorities drawing on support from provincial agencies. Other local responsibilities include:

- ⇒ Managing contracts for contracted agency
- ⇒ Support for professionals who want to build skill sets in HIV/AIDS treatment and care
- ⇒ Local implementation of provincial plans
- ⇒ Local deployment of prevention initiatives

Finally, Dr. Penny Ballem, the Deputy Minister of Health addressed the group via videoconference. She identified HIV/AIDS as a priority for the Provincial Government and encouraged the Health Authorities to continue with their work.

This HIV/AIDS Roundtable was an important step towards building increased communications and collaboration between Health Authorities and the Ministry of Health. It is hoped that this forum will provide for a more coordinated and strategic approach to HIV/AIDS in B.C. Another Roundtable has been proposed to discuss leadership coordination and to focus on Aboriginal HIV/AIDS in the province.

Keep checking back for updates at the PHSA's HIV/AIDS Program web site:
www.phsa.ca/AgenciesServices/Services/HIV_AIDSProg