

## Renewing Our Response Update:

Renewing Our Response (RoR) is an expert advisory committee made up of representatives from organizations and Aboriginal community voices that work in the field of HIV/AIDS as it relates to Aboriginal communities in BC. We meet on a quarterly basis, having just met on September 30<sup>th</sup> & October 1<sup>st</sup>. This update will be sent out after every meeting to ensure that community is kept aware of the work being done by this advisory. We have been working very hard to try and ensure that HIV concerns in Aboriginal communities are kept on the minds of government and Aboriginal leaders. Much of our time lately has been taken up with the Seek and Treat for Optimal Prevention (STOP) pilot project.

To provide a very brief background on STOP, it is a pilot project that will run in Prince George and Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, the two areas of the province with the highest rates of HIV infection. Key stakeholders involved include: Northern Health, Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS (BCCfE), Providence Health Care, Provincial Health Services Authority, and the Ministry of Health Living and Sport. The basis for the project is treatment as prevention of HIV infection, building on research done by the BCCfE. RoR, along with other community organizations, has been working to ensure that community voices are heard in this pilot project and that community engagement takes place. We are happy to say that RoR does have representation on four of the committees for STOP: Northern Health, Vancouver Coastal Health, Provincial Health Services Authority, and the Provincial Leadership Committee. STOP is still very much in the planning stages, and STOP updates should be forthcoming from the BCCfE.

On another note, RoR has been meeting with Aboriginal leaders to discuss the seriousness of HIV infection in Aboriginal communities. We have presented to the First Nation Summit, in both June and September, as well as the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. It is our goal to ensure that Aboriginal leaders are kept aware of the status of HIV throughout the province.

Finally, we want to send out a big "Thank you" to those of you who completed our *Community Needs Assessment* survey. The information from those surveys is currently being collected and a final report will be available in December.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the work of RoR, please visit our website at [www.renewingourresponse.ca](http://www.renewingourresponse.ca) or contact Heidi Standeven @ 604-913-3332 or [hstandeven@red-road.org](mailto:hstandeven@red-road.org).