

## NEWS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

#### **Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life 2014: You Don't Have To Do Much To Help Over 71,000 Canadians Who Need Your Support**

**[Victoria, BC; September 16]** – On Sunday, September 21, 2014, we invite all Victoria residents to participate in the 2014 Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life, Victoria BC, to raise funds that directly benefit AIDS service organizations within our community.

When you have HIV/AIDS, life gets a lot harder. Despite advances in treatment, there still remains no cure or vaccines to prevent new infections.

“The Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life reminds us all that HIV still poses major obstacles to people living with the virus and to our communities and that the need to respond by providing support and creating awareness, is as urgent as ever,” says Craig Dales, Executive Director of the Vancouver Island Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Society (VPWAS). “All Walk proceeds stay in our community and enable the Vancouver Island Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Society to offer programs and services to improve the lives of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. On Sunday, September 21, 2014, we’re challenging all residents to come and help the over 71,000 Canadians living with HIV.”

There are already 11,700 known cases of HIV in B.C. as of 2011, including 888 on Vancouver Island as of 2012. As many as 200 more on Vancouver Island are infected with HIV and don't know it.

Warren Bailey is very proud of VPWAS and of the organization's roots. Bailey, who tested positive for HIV in 1993 and was diagnosed with AIDS after suffering from pneumonia in 2001 and cryptococcal meningitis in 2003, currently works as Programs Coordinator with VPWAS. “My viral load is now undetectable because of the advancements in medications and treatment and a healthier outlook and lifestyle,” says Bailey. “We have come a long way from when a group of HIV positive people sat around a kitchen table in 1991 to discuss what could be done to enrich the lives of those living with HIV/AIDS and didn't see any hope. This is why I am walking, to help provide that safe space and support.”

So don't just stand there, help us tackle the obstacles by registering for your local Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life, sponsoring a participant or a team, volunteering or making a donation. [www.aidswalkforlife.ca/victoria.htm](http://www.aidswalkforlife.ca/victoria.htm). Join us at Centennial Square on Sunday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at 12 (noon).

The Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life in Victoria is being held in conjunction with Walks that will be taking place in over 40 communities across Canada the week of September 17-25.

## **National Sponsors**

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## **About Vancouver Island Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Society (VPWAS)**

The Vancouver Island Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Society (VPWAS), founded in 1991, is the only peer based and operated HIV/AIDS organization on Vancouver Island and offers compassionate, peer support, treatment information and education to all persons living with HIV/AIDS as well as prevention services to people in Greater Victoria.

In addition to supporting our mission, we also offer life enhancement activities and a number of programs and services to our membership. Many of these programs and services are prepared and operated by HIV+ member volunteers themselves. With staff support we encourage this as we feel it enables self-empowerment for our members and promotes self-improvement through a healthy lifestyle and outlook on the future. All proceeds and donations go to support these programs and services directly.

## **Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life**

The Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life is a project of the Canadian AIDS Society in partnership with the Positive Living Society of British Columbia, the AIDS Committee of Toronto, and community-based AIDS organizations across Canada. During the national week-long event, cities and communities from across the country host Walks to raise funds for local services and programming and to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS. As Canada's most important HIV/AIDS awareness and fundraising event, the Scotiabank AIDS Walk for Life has now raised over \$40 million for community-based HIV/AIDS service organizations since 1996 and has attracted well over half a million participants. Scotiabank continues its multi-year commitment as title sponsor for the AIDS Walk, playing a key role in expanding its promotional and fundraising capacity.

For more information, or to arrange for interviews, please contact:

Craig Dales  
Executive Director  
Vancouver Island Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Society (VPWAS)  
250.382.7927  
[craig.dales@vpwas.org](mailto:craig.dales@vpwas.org)

[www.vpwas.org](http://www.vpwas.org)  
[www.aidswalkforlife.ca/victoria.htm](http://www.aidswalkforlife.ca/victoria.htm)

Available for Photo Ops and interviews:  
Dawn Clouthier, Board Chair, VPWAS  
Warren Bailey, Program Coordinator, VPWAS