

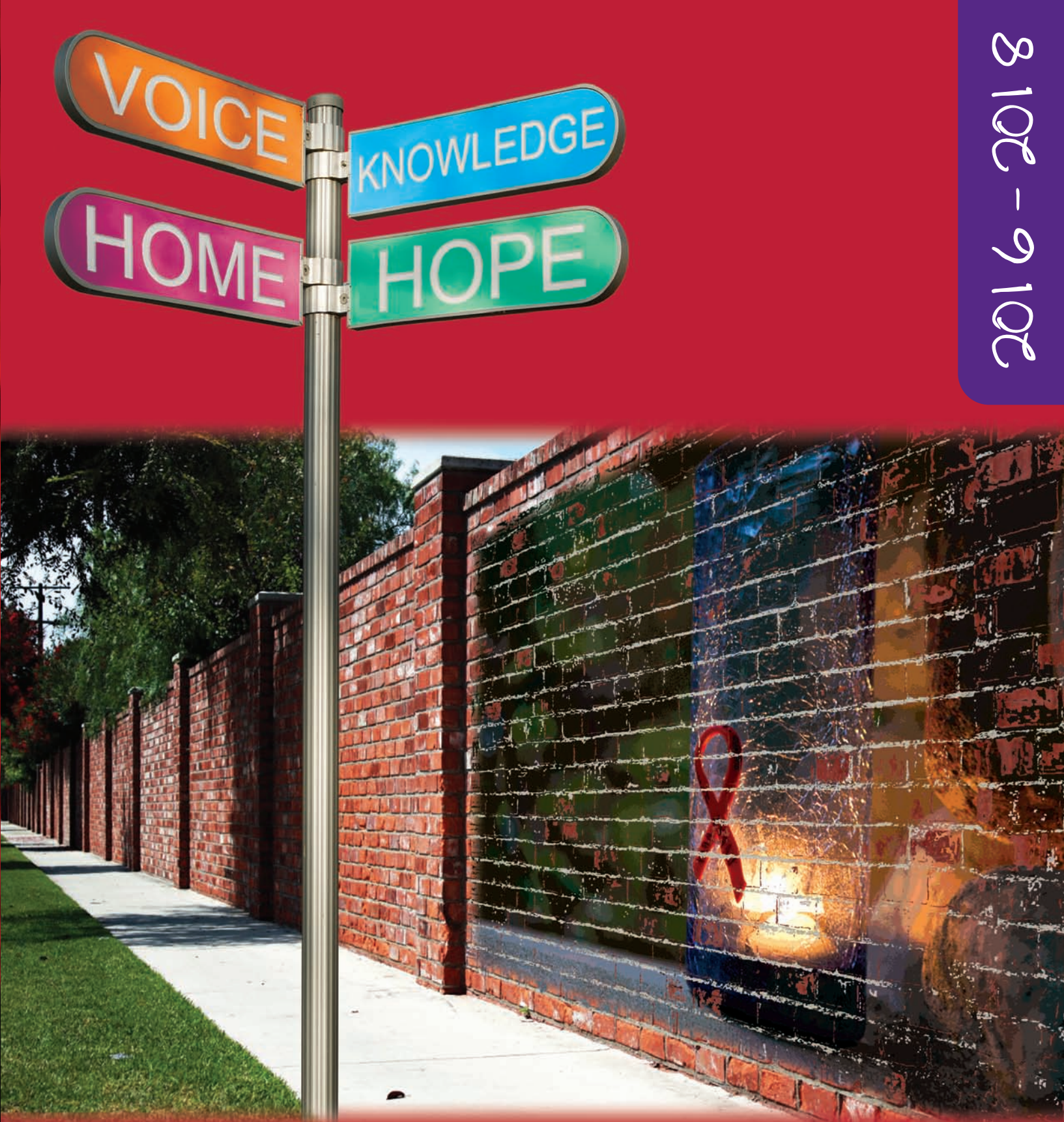


Regional  
HIV/AIDS  
Connection

#30 - 186 King Street, London, Ontario N6A 1C7  
Tel: 519-434-1601 • 1-866-920-1601 • Fax: 519-434-1843  
[www.hivaidsconnection.ca](http://www.hivaidsconnection.ca)

596 Pall Mall Street, London, Ontario N5Y 2Z9  
Tel: 519-433-3951

Serving Perth, Huron, Lambton, Elgin, Middlesex, and Oxford Counties



# Strategic Plan Regional HIV/AIDS Connection





# Message from The Board & Executive Director



On behalf of The Board of Directors, I am pleased to release Regional HIV/AIDS Connection’s (RHAC) new Strategic Plan - 2016 to 2018.

This forward-thinking Plan truly reflects the culmination of our legal amalgamation with John Gordon Home. It

builds on our remarkable history of success and serves to ensure we remain, not only relevant, but vital to the people we serve. Developed during the year of our thirtieth anniversary, we have committed to a Plan that will strengthen our capacity to serve, continue our legacy of advocacy and move us in directions that leverage our expertise as a **community inspired organization dedicated to positively impacting the lives of individuals and diverse communities living with, at risk for, or affected by HIV and Hepatitis C.**

Simply stated, our organization is about people. It’s about vulnerable people! Often when individuals come to RHAC they are seeking information and resources or looking for ongoing support. They frequently speak about feeling isolated. Most people

who seek out RHAC are profoundly impacted by HIV and related stigmas. It is HIV stigma that contributes to new infections and prevents people from accessing services. It is societal stigma related to addiction and mental health that diminishes the lives of those who struggle in the day to day. In 2016 stigma infused homophobia continues to play a role in new HIV infections within the gay/bi/trans communities. The priorities outlined in our Strategic Plan will strengthen our capacity to address HIV stigma, it will enhance our accountability and outcomes reporting and it will ensure the people we serve remain in the centre of all governance and operational decisions.

The RHAC board would like to acknowledge the talented staff and volunteers, committed community partners and supporters for all they bring to enrich our community inspired mission. The people we serve are at the heart of our work and their voices are vital. The social justice work of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C remains urgent because the epidemic is not over. It’s about making a difference in people’s lives. Together through a vision of **Voice, Knowledge, Home and Hope** we touch lives, we transform lives and we save lives.

We are proud of our Strategic Plan and committed to its full execution!

Thank you for your continued support!

Brian Lester  
Executive Director



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# 3



## Developing Our Capacity to Serve.

- 1 To develop a comprehensive and integrated Human Resource Strategy for RHAC that includes initiatives on succession planning, staff retention, more equitable compensation and continually enhancing staff morale, contributions and development.
- 2 To develop infrastructure strategies that enhance services and supports to clients, staff, volunteers and others, involving:
  - A new program and administrative space for RHAC, possibly engaging with other service providers on a co-location basis.
  - A comprehensive multi-year Technology Plan to direct RHAC's investments in program, operational, management and social media applications.
- 3 To undertake a comprehensive branding initiative for RHAC that develops the organization's brand, including the name, core values and messaging as well as aligned annual, multi-channel communications strategy.
- 4 To develop a multi-year Fund Development and Income Diversification Strategy that enhances organizational financial resources, flexibility, and supports organizational growth needs.
- 5 To undertake a Governance Review, including risk management perspectives, that continues RHAC's governance growth and effectiveness.





# Growing Our Engagement with the Communities within the Region.

- 1 To actively participate in research initiatives that enhance the quality and effectiveness of RHAC’s programs and services.
- 2 To continue to be the leading advocate and voice for and with people with HIV / AIDS and Hep-C, both alone and with others.
- 3 To continue to grow RHAC’s educational and prevention initiatives and awareness programs in order support the people served.
- 4 To undertake increased engagement with defined local communities on HIV / AIDS and Hep-C services and advocacy, aligned with the new provincial AIDS Strategy and Hep-C Services.
- 5 To pursue strategies that enhance awareness and access to RHAC’s programs and services across the six counties served.
- 6 To continue to be an active participant and leader in local, provincial and national advocacy, planning, policy development and other forums.



## Our Mission

We are community-inspired and dedicated to positively impacting the lives of individuals and diverse communities living with, at-risk for or affected by HIV / AIDS and Hepatitis C







# Introduction

Regional HIV/AIDS Connection (RHAC) is a leading AIDS service organization with thirty years of experience impacting lives. It delivers counselling, residential programs, community outreach, and education to people who have HIV or are at-risk of having HIV/AIDs or Hepatitis C (Hep-C). Proudly, it is a consolidated organization with the John Gordon Home – Canada’s first AIDS Hospice, now a respite and transition home.



With firm roots in AIDS advocacy, human rights, and end-of-life care, RHAC has now embarked on an era where many people are living long lives with HIV and Hep C. This, however, does not mean their lives will be easy – as many RHAC clients are facing great challenges including discrimination, homelessness, poverty, lack of nutrition and access to proper health care.

## Ensuring Our Programs Respond to Evolving Needs.

- 1 To continue to develop and apply harm reduction strategies as one of the primary service approaches within RHAC’s programs and services.
- 2 To continually assess RHAC programs and services to ensure they are evidence-informed and meet the evolving needs of the community and people served, and are connected with the Cascade Continuum.
- 3 To strengthen existing and to actively pursue new and more innovative shared services and collaborative initiatives as a strong foundation for RHAC’s programs and services.
- 4 To continue to develop an increasingly robust outcomes identification, measurement and reporting program for RHAC.





# Strategic Directions

Strategic Directions represent the priorities that RHAC believes it needs to work on in order to continue to advance towards the achievement of its Vision and Mission. Each Strategic Direction has a set of strategies that provide the framework for an Implementation Plan that covers the 2016 to 2018 period.



Three Strategic Directions and aligned strategies have been identified for RHAC over the 2016 to 2018 period. Each direction has an implementation timeline, accountability or lead person and identified outcomes. For further information please contact Regional HIV/AIDS Connection.

Working within an anti-racist/anti-discrimination and harm reduction framework, Regional HIV/AIDS Connection meets people where they are at without judgment, and supports people to make informed choices about their own lives.

It is essential to Regional HIV/AIDS Connection that each and every person with HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis C, be served in a way that reflects its values and principles. Additionally, RHAC strives to remove barriers – such as stigma; it ensures that education and prevention are at the core of its mission and it constantly changes to reflect new and emerging needs. It honours its history, and is inspired by the need to plan for the future.

The time for new strategic directions is now. In the spring of 2015, the Board of Directors, Executive Director, and senior staff identified the need to undertake a new Strategic Plan that would be reflective of the amalgamation and would mark the end of the previous planning cycles for the partnering organizations. This document represents a Strategic Plan that emerged following a comprehensive planning process. It was presented to and approved by the Board of Directors in January 2016.

The new Plan reflects changes within the operating environment and has been built to support the new HIV/AIDS Strategy for the Province of Ontario; it allows for capacity building with renewed optimism about federal government support for the HIV/AIDS sector and it recognizes the strong partnerships that exist at the local level – such as its municipalities, regional committees, and Health Units. It also identifies a need for fund development diversification if RHAC is to continue to provide unfunded programs and services that are highly valued for changing lives – such as its award, winning Open Closet program for LGBTQ2 youth. ■







## Our Principles

- Dignity
- Inclusion
- Valuing Staff and Volunteers
- Responsiveness
- Peer Engagement
- Advocacy
- Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS
- Accountability
- A Learning Culture
- Harm Reduction
- Collaboration
- Honouring our History





## Our Value Statement

### Courage

It takes courage to break through,  
to speak out and to give voice and value  
to the needs of the people affected by HIV / AIDS and Hep-C.

### To do what is right

This phrase speaks to the need to be bold, purposeful, proactive  
and to knowingly pursue what is right for those  
impacted by HIV/AIDS and Hep-C,  
and in fighting stigma and discrimination.

## Our RHAC Vision

A Vision is like a horizon, that is a future state that galvanizes the energy, focus and goodwill of all stakeholders of RHAC to move in the same direction with common cause and focus. Similar to a horizon that can move as one advances towards it, a Vision also needs to ensure flexibility and the capacity to

adapt to the changing perspectives and realities of the operating environment.

**The following Vision was developed for Regional HIV/AIDS Connection.**

VOICE

KNOWLEDGE

HOME

HOPE





## VOICE

People with HIV / AIDS, Hep-C and related conditions are often hidden in our communities. They can lack visibility and respect which results in many people not being accepted or valued as full community members. HIV stigma is a key driver of these circumstances. RHAC gives voice to the many people who are challenged by these conditions through its communications and education programs, advocacy and the supports, counselling and housing it provides. This work gives voice to both the individuals who are challenged, as well as to the groups and the communities working actively to improve the quality of life and opportunities for those living with or affected by HIV / AIDS and Hepatitis C.

## KNOWLEDGE

This theme is about both improving the quality of life for people living with HIV and Hep-C and decreasing new infections. These outcomes reflect an array of needs, involving education, research, best practices and a host of other inputs, that are necessary to improve the quality of life outcomes for people who are affected by, living with or at-risk for HIV / AIDS and Hep-C. Knowledge both educates individuals on the risks that people need to be aware of and the actions they need to take to reduce their potential to contract HIV / AIDS and Hep-C, as well as to source and apply best practices, sound research and other information that enhances the quality and benefits of the programs and services RHAC delivers to the people it serves.

## HOME

RHAC provides a home for people who are living with HIV / AIDS and Hep-C. Home reflects the residential services through the John Gordon Home, which is a Home with a Heart, a special place for people who receive one year of supports in order to stabilize their situations, gain confidence and to return to the community and a home on a longer term basis. The John Gordon Home is a physical home, but RHAC as an organization, is also a home for people who are looking for support, engagement, to build confidence and other relationship-based perspectives that go beyond simply treatment and referrals. RHAC is a home to many people in many different ways which truly reflects RHAC's special and unique relationships, roles and capacities.

## HOPE

Hope is about a world where there will be no new HIV or Hep-C infections and no further deaths from AIDS. It is about a day when stigma no longer exists. It is about finding a cure! For many, HIV has moved from being an almost certain death sentence to a manageable chronic disease. Today treatments for Hep-C continue to emerge and access is improving. Hope is a vital energy as we continue to address the ongoing challenges associated with HIV/AIDS and Hep-C. Hope is a constant, is inspiring to all stakeholders, and is the outcome that sustains RHAC's momentum, focus and efforts.