



World AIDS Day – December 1 – a reminder that HIV/AIDS is still a major international health concern

World AIDS Day on December 1 is an opportunity for nations to review international statistics, current issues and trends, rates of infection, innovative treatments, research funding, and prevention.

And it's also an opportunity for the global community to remember the millions of people around the world who have died from the autoimmune disease.

Since 1988, HIV/AIDS activists have observed World AIDS Day by raising public awareness through research and education, fundraising initiatives, and anti-prejudice campaigns.

The red ribbon became an international symbol of HIV/AIDS support and a commitment to finding a cure for the virus that's claimed an estimated 39 million people and infected 78 million around the world (amfAR stats).

In 1985, the Public Health Agency of Canada began gathering data on the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). As of 2012, they reported a total of 76,275 HIV diagnoses. Canadian women currently comprise 23.1 per cent of the nation's HIV-infected individuals.

According to 2014 stats from the World Health Organization (WHO), there are currently 36.9 million people living with HIV in the world, including two million newly diagnosed last year.

WHO also reports that AIDS claimed 1.2 million people internationally in 2014.

That's why HEU continues to support the work of community organizations like Positive Living Society of British Columbia and the Stephen Lewis Foundation, who advocate for better education, support and care for those living with HIV, both at home and globally.

December 1, 2015