



A Statement from The AIDS Network’s Board of Directors on HIV, housing, and human rights

The AIDS Network recognizes the importance of housing as an important social determinant of health for the populations we serve. People at risk of, vulnerable to or living with HIV, hepatitis C and other related conditions need access to safe, affordable housing to engage in prevention and treatment strategies for their overall health and well-being.

People experiencing homelessness must be afforded equal human rights and dignity and that requires municipal governments and law enforcement to equally prioritize the health, well-being and safety of people experiencing homelessness, including those in encampments.

Clearing encampments does not solve the underlying issues, leaving people without shelter, and due to significant risks posed by pandemics or other environmental conditions may infringe upon the human rights of those living in encampments when acceptable alternatives are not provided.

We urge community leaders and providers take a housing first approach to helping people access non-congregate housing options.

The AIDS Network values the work of our fellow organizations on the front lines of harm reduction work in our communities, including Keeping Six, HAMSMaRT and the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic. We wholly endorse these organizations calls for city and law enforcement responses to issues arising from poverty and homelessness to be rooted in upholding the human rights and dignity of people experiencing homelessness.