

Ottawa-Carleton  
GLBT Wellness Project

"GLBT Wellness - A Community Collaboration"

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**PRESS RELEASE**

April 27, 2000  
For immediate release

OTTAWA-CARLETON GLBT WELLNESS PROJECT LAUNCH: "GLBT WELLNESS -- A COMMUNITY COLLABORATION" -- \$80,000 FUNDING APPROVED

[OTTAWA] Pink Triangle Services (PTS) and the Ottawa-Carleton Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgendered (GLBT) Health Task Group announced today receipt of \$80,000 in grant funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) at the launch of the GLBT Wellness Project, held at the Centretown Community Health Centre.

The GLBT Wellness Project is a community-based survey to determine the health and wellness needs of the GLBT communities and to document existing wellness resources available for GLBT residents and their families in Ottawa-Carleton.

A major goal of the Project is to develop an awareness of health issues; reduce barriers to health care and prevention services; and promote, enhance, and sustain health norms for GLBT people throughout the region.

"We are excited by this project," says Barry Deepprose, PTS, President. "It will enable health and wellness service providers to have extensive information, for the first time in Ottawa-Carleton, on the health and wellness needs of local GLBT residents and their families throughout the region."

"Our goal for the survey is to reach as many local residents and their families as we can," says spokesperson, Bruce Bursey, Ottawa-Carleton GLBT Health Task Group. "We want to hear from seniors, youth, members of our diverse local multicultural communities, and rural and urban residents who are GLBT or who have family members who are."

The project will lay the foundation for strategic actions to address the wellness needs of local GLBT residents and their families. Another goal is to foster partnerships between health and wellness service providers and the GLBT communities, thereby contributing to the well being of more than 70,000 local residents.

"GLBT wellness is a community challenge, " says Bruce Bursey, "it also helps to build a healthy community. Our concept of wellness includes physical, mental, spiritual, sexual,

intellectual, social, and emotional well being. We will be seeking the help of local residents and groups in the GLBT communities, local health and social services providers and spiritual advisors."

The project should take a year to complete. The survey will be broadly distributed and will be available on the Internet. A web site has been developed and will be used to provide information on the project and as an electronic survey tool. Results of the survey, recommendations for strategic actions, and downloadable copies of the handbook, providing information on local health and wellness service choices throughout the region, will be available on the web at the completion of the project in May 2001.

For more information:

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# Ottawa-Carleton GLBT Wellness Project

## "GLBT Wellness - A Community Collaboration"

### Background

The Gay, Lesbian Bisexual and Transgendered (GLBT) Wellness Project will identify, for the first time in Ottawa-Carleton, the wellness needs of local GLBT residents. It will lay the foundation for actions to address these needs and for on-going partnerships between community-based health and wellness providers and groups and agencies within the GLBT community. Most importantly, it will bring into the homes of GLBT people and their families information on wellness options and strategies, thereby contributing to the well being of more than 70,000 local residents

The GLBT Wellness Project is a community-based survey to determine the wellness needs of the GLBT community and to document existing wellness resources available to GLBT residents of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC). The GLBT Wellness Project is a Pink Triangle Services (PTS) sponsored community project in collaboration with the GLBT Health Task Group, funded by the RMOC and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The GLBT Health Task Group is a true grass-roots organization founded by individuals who saw the need to address the special wellness needs of GLBT people. After several broad community consultations, a core Task Group, which included members of the PTS Board of Directors, developed the project concept and sought funding. The Task Group decided to partner with Pink Triangle Services (PTS) for the project. The Task Group believed that PTS had the infrastructure, place in the community, and the same concern for wellness to make it an official sponsor.

Pink Triangle Services (PTS), a social service agency and charitable non-profit organization, has been operating since 1984 when it grew out of Gays of Ottawa. Its services include: the Gayline (238-1717), the nation's longest-operating gay per support line; a wide variety of discussion and peer support groups for GLB people; a resource centre of over 4,000 volumes; and, a youth program. It has presented anti-homophobia workshops for the Ottawa Police, Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the Red Cross, and to all Regional Health employees. The AIDS Committee of Ottawa was founded in 1985 as a sub-committee of PTS.

The GLBT Wellness Project views wellness and health as more than treatment of specific illnesses. It is a holistic approach that acknowledges that many factors other than specific health care concerns contribute to the health of specific populations. These factors are broad and interrelated. They include such factors as lifestyle, social support, behaviours, socioeconomic status, and environment. Improving wellness includes not only health care, but increasing the capacity of communities to create greater wellness for their members and to assist them to develop personal skills that foster wellness. In this sense, the GLBT people can be identified as a "population" with

special wellness needs that must be addressed. We would hope that these are identified through our needs assessment and that the report of the project will lead to strategies as to how we can foster wellness for the GLBT population.

The results of the project will provide important information about the GLBT community and its wellness needs to:

- local residents and groups in the GLBT community,
- public health planners,
- educators,
- local wellness agencies,
- service providers and spiritual counselors, and
- local, provincial and federal departments of health and social services.

The project should take a year to complete and will produce a GLBT wellness handbook and web site, providing extensive information on local resources to meet GLBT wellness needs. Moreover, the project should contribute to the breaking down of homophobic and transphobic barriers that interfere with access to culturally appropriate wellness services for GLBT people and their families and friends by:

- providing reliable information on wellness services options
- promoting wellness strategies which enhance the well-being of GLBT residents and their families; and
- raising awareness of the need of GLBT residents and their family members for safe and welcoming places of service delivery and ways to contribute to trust and security.

#### Messages

- The GLBT Wellness Project is important to all GLBT people and their families and friends.
- Wellness includes physical, mental, spiritual, sexual, intellectual, social, and emotional well being.
- GLBT people and their families and friends need safe and welcoming space from cradle to grave, in public and in the workplace.
- GLBT wellness is a community challenge and helps to build a healthy community.
- Partnerships between service providers and the GLBT community will breakdown barriers and contribute to safe and welcoming places.
- There are many success stories and models for success.

#### Volunteers

Success of the project depends on active participation of GLBT community volunteers and community-based service providers. Volunteers are needed for a range of activities, including:

- Out-reach to multicultural and rural communities, youth, seniors and workplaces
- Web Site development

- Organizing workshops and focus groups and staffing information booths
- Development and distribution of posters, brochures and the survey
- Liaison with service providers and GLBT community organizations, and
- Multi-language translation services

For more information:

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