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July 20, 2011

Marihuana Consultations
Controlled Substances and Tobacco Directorate
Health Canada
Mail Room, Federal Records Centre - Bldg 18
1st Floor, 161 Goldenrod Driveway, Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa ON K1A 0K9

Dear Madam/Sir:

Re: proposed changes to the medical marihuana program

The HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic (Ontario) ("HALCO") is pleased to be given the opportunity to participate in the Consultation on Proposed Improvements to the Marihuana Medical Access Program.

HALCO is a poverty law clinic serving the legal needs of low-income people in Ontario who are living with HIV/AIDS. We are a charitable non-share capital corporation with nine members on our Board of Directors, the majority of whom are HIV positive.

A large number of our client base use the Marihuana Medical Access Program in order to get access to medical marijuana to treat their illnesses and/or alleviate negative side effects of medications.

This clinic is pleased to endorse the submissions of the Canadian AIDS Society (CAS), dated July 19, 2011 (attached).

While we agree with the CAS's entire submission, we would like to highlight some key points:

- We agree with the CAS's assessment of the proposal that individuals would deal directly with their own physician to obtain authorization to use cannabis for medical purposes. We share the CAS's concern that physicians be given better access to information and evidence about the use of cannabis for medical purposes.

- We agree with the CAS that medical cannabis dispensaries should be included in a cannabis distribution system and that Health Canada should consider including pharmacies as well.
- We share the CAS's concerns respecting the elimination of the identification cards currently issued under the *Marihuana Medical Access Regulation*.
- As the CAS does, we oppose the phasing out of licenses to produce medical marijuana and favour finding a solution for people to be able to produce their own cannabis.

Yours truly,
HIV & AIDS LEGAL CLINIC (ONTARIO)
per:

Renée Lang
Barrister & Solicitor

Attch.