

HALCO

HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario

news

- HALCO provides free legal services to people living with HIV in Ontario -

HALCO news Autumn 2014:



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HALCO Annual General Meeting 2014

Our 2014 annual general meeting took place on September 10, 2014. **Nicole Nussbaum** spoke about our **Trans* Legal Needs Assessment (Ontario) project** and also gave an overview of some key issues affecting trans* communities in Ontario. Nicole is a lawyer with Legal Aid Ontario and is seconded to HALCO to lead the trans* project. While the project is focused on the needs of the broader trans* community, a specific component will be dedicated to trans* people living with HIV.

You can find more information about the project on our website:

www.halco.org/our-services/trans-legal-needs-assessment-ontario.

New board members **Scott Nickerson**, **Judith Odhiambo** and **Andrew Paizee** were elected to HALCO's volunteer board of directors. HALCO board member **Barbara Ncho** was re-elected (our complete Board list is on page 17).

Departing board members **Tracey Gregory**, **Peter Gross** and **Gregory Simmons** were acknowledged for their contributions to the HALCO board.

HALCO Annual Report 2013-2014

Our Annual Report 2013-2014 was presented to our membership at our annual general meeting and includes:

- highlights of our casework, law reform and public legal education activities
- a variety of statistics about our work
- our financial report
- recipients of the 2013 Kreppner Awards
- our board, staff, funders and supporters



Our annual reports are available on the **About Us** section of our website www.halco.org/about. Please contact us if you would like a print copy.

Highlights of some recent activities

- We launched the Trans* Legal Needs Assessment (Ontario) project: www.halco.org/our-services/trans-legal-needs-assessment-ontario.
- In the past 12 months, HALCO staff responded to more than 4,000 requests for service.
- HALCO staff conducted numerous workshops throughout the province on a variety of legal topics. We held the tenth and eleventh in our ever-popular in-house free public legal education workshop series in April/May and November/December 2014. For more information about our public legal education workshops, please see page 16.

HALCO's 6th Annual Fundraising Bowl-a-thon will be held on Saturday February 28, 2015

On Saturday February 28, 2015, beginning at 8:00 pm, HALCO's 6th Annual Fundraising Bowl-a-thon will be held at Bathurst Bowlerama, 2788 Bathurst Street, Toronto.



Please join us for a fabulous evening of fundraising and disco dancing bowling as we raise funds to support the work of the clinic. There are prizes for the individual and team that raise the most money; prizes for the best – and worst! – bowling score; and, the very popular Team Spirit Award! As in previous years, the silent auction promises to house a treasure chest of items for you to purchase and enjoy!

For more information on how you can get involved, please contact:

Bill Merryweather at merryww@lao.on.ca

HALCO welcomes donations!

HALCO is a registered charity and welcomes donations (tax receipts are issued for donations of \$20.00 or more). There is much demand for our services. You can help us meet this ever-increasing need by making a donation.

You can make a one-time donation or consider joining our **Monthly Giving Program**. Monthly giving provides us with a steady and dependable base of support. For as little as \$10, \$20 or \$25 per month, you can make a huge difference! You choose the amount. Your generosity will support the work we do throughout the year.

If you would like to support our work by making a donation or becoming a monthly donor, please contact **Bill Merryweather** by telephone at 416-340-7790 or toll free 1-888-705-8889, extension 42, or by e-mail merryww@lao.on.ca.

You can also make a donation at any time by clicking on the **DONATE** button on our website: www.halco.org.

HALCO thanks all of our funders and supporters

Core Funders:

- Legal Aid Ontario
- AIDS Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Funding Partner:

- M.A.C AIDS Fund

Individuals:

- To all those who support us in so many ways: without you, we would not be able to do the work that we do!

Specialty Legal Clinics Co-location Project

HALCO is one of more than 75 community legal clinics in Ontario. Local legal clinics serve their local community (a geographic catchment area). Specialty legal clinics serve a particular community of people or respond to a particular area of law. HALCO's community is people living with HIV in Ontario.

A number of specialty clinics and the Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario (ACLCO) have been exploring the feasibility of a co-location model. The clinics anticipate that co-location will:

- promote increased collaboration and information exchange amongst the clinics
- enable collective investment in improved information technology
- reduce overall leasing costs, and
- provide an opportunity to increase the efficiency of administrative systems.

Most importantly, the project will facilitate improved services for the clinics' communities.

This project is not about the merging of clinics, but about co-location. Phase 1 of the project was exploratory with the primary objective of establishing an understanding of the participating clinics' current situations including geographic requirements and functional space needs. Phase 1 resulted in a high-level concept for the co-location space for each specialty clinic to consider when deciding if co-location is appropriate for their clinic.

HALCO agreed to move to phase 2 of the project, which is focussed on facilitating the transition to a new space, but only if HALCO maintains its own separate office and reception space in order to respond to the unique confidentiality concerns of people with HIV. Further, HALCO agreed to move to phase 2 based on the following assurances from Legal Aid Ontario (LAO):

- All clinics will maintain their current incorporated status and continue to be governed by independent boards of directors representative of the communities they serve.
- Administrative savings realized through the project will be reinvested in the specialty clinics to enhance client service, and support and strengthen the clinic system.
- There will be no job losses, although the duties of certain positions in particular clinics may be altered.

While HALCO has agreed to move to phase 2, a final decision about co-location has not been made. HALCO, along with the other participating clinics, will be making a final decision about actual co-location over the coming months as we search for a new site and negotiate with LAO about funding for the new space.

Specialty Legal Clinic Co-location Project continues on page 5

The other specialty legal clinics participating in the co-location project are:

- Advocacy Centre for the Elderly
- Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario
- ARCH Disability Law Centre
- Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario
- Canadian Environmental Law Association
- Income Security Advocacy Centre
- Industrial Accident Victims Group Ontario
- Justice for Children and Youth
- Landlord's Self-Help Centre
- Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic

For more information about the project, please visit the project website:
<http://specialtylegalclinics.ca/>.

No matter where we are housed, HALCO's primary focus will continue to be the provision of free legal services to people living with HIV across Ontario.

Increases to Legal Aid Ontario Financial Eligibility Guidelines

Legal Aid Ontario has financial eligibility guidelines for most Legal Aid services, including community legal clinics like HALCO. Legal Aid financial eligibility guideline amounts were increased by 6% on November 1, 2014. The next two 6% increases will be made on April 1, 2015, and April 1, 2016. The financial eligibility guidelines had not increased since 1994. The increases mean that more low income people in Ontario will be eligible for Legal Aid services. The government of Ontario will provide new funding to Legal Aid Ontario to help serve the larger numbers of people eligible for legal aid services. The increases will increase access to justice in Ontario. Legal Aid Ontario is currently consulting with community legal clinics about how to distribute the new funding to clinics.

Legal Aid Ontario Visits HALCO

On October 2, 2014, HALCO was delighted to welcome members of the Legal Aid Ontario board of directors and staff for a visit at our office. Ryan Peck, HALCO executive director/lawyer, provided an overview about HALCO, including our history and services. Legal Aid Ontario is one of our two core funders and we very much appreciated the opportunity to let them know a little about how we use the invaluable funding that we receive.

Legal Clinics Project with St. Michael's Hospital Family Health Team

ARCH Disability Law Centre, in collaboration with HALCO, Aboriginal Legal Services Toronto and Neighbourhood Legal Services, received funding from Legal Aid Ontario to develop a medical-legal partnership with the St. Michael's Hospital Academic Family Health Team (FHT).

This partnership is Ontario's first between a hospital and community legal clinics. FHT staff can refer patients to a lawyer housed within one of the FHT clinics in downtown Toronto.

The lawyer will work with FHT to address the social determinants of health of FHT patients and to improve access to legal services for patients with low or modest incomes.

FHT pursued this partnership in order to improve the health outcomes of its patients by addressing the social factors causing illness or poor health. For example, the threat of eviction or difficulty in securing income such as disability benefits can seriously affect health. FHT serves about 34,000 patients in Toronto's downtown core. A needs assessment found that almost half of the patients who were referred to social workers had at least one legal issue and many had two or three. These 1,980 patients had many legal issues that community legal clinics handle, including tenant, disability, immigration and refugee, human rights, and employment law.

The St. Michael's Hospital Legal Services Project aims to:

- provide on-site legal services for the patients of FHT
- deliver rights education to patients on legal issues relevant to persons with low-incomes
- deliver training for health care providers to identify legal issues and make referrals
- engage in systemic advocacy on issues of importance to the low-income community served by St. Michael's Hospital and the community legal clinic partners, and
- evaluate the success of the project with a view to assisting similar partnerships in other communities in Ontario.

At this time, the project provides for one lawyer to be located at FHT's 80 Bond Street clinic.

Contributions from St. Michael's Hospital for space and other supports along with a three-year grant from Legal Aid Ontario will cover the costs of the partnership to March 2017. The partners are pursuing long-term funding in order to sustain the project beyond that date.

Autonomy in medical decision-making at the Supreme Court of Canada

In our *HALCO news Winter 2013/2014* newsletter, we reported on the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in the *Rasouli* consent to treatment case.

In October 2014, HALCO, along with the Legal Network, intervened at the Supreme Court in another case about the rights of patients: *R. v. Carter*.

Although the *Carter* case is about the right to assisted death, the case has broad implications for how we, as a society, allow people to live their lives and to make important choices related to their personal health.

As noted by **Ryan Peck**, HALCO's executive director, in a press release about the *Carter* case:

“This case has broad implications for how we, as a society, allow people to live their lives and make important choices related to their personal health. No matter the health issue, the law must respect and protect autonomy in medical decision-making. For people living with HIV or other disabilities, who have longstanding interactions with the health care system, this is particularly critical. Those who support them in exercising their autonomy must not be threatened with prison.”



You can read our **Intervener Factum** (arguments) on our website:

www.halco.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Supreme_Court_Intervener_Factum-Medical_Decision-making_Autonomy-CARTER-2014Aug.pdf.

The **British Columbia Civil Liberties Association** (BCCLA) filed the *Carter* case in April 2011 to challenge the criminal laws surrounding assisted dying.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Carter* is expected in 2015.

Federal Government passes new law that will deny sex worker rights to health and safety

As we reported in our *HALCO news Winter 2013-2014* newsletter, in 2013 the Supreme Court released its landmark decision in *Canada v Bedford*. The decision struck down as unconstitutional three key provisions of Canada's *Criminal Code* dealing with prostitution because the provisions violate the rights of sex workers by undermining their health and safety.

Based on the decision, the *Criminal Code* provisions remained in effect for one year to give the federal government time to decide whether to make new laws or not. If the government did not enact new legislation by December 20, 2014, most adult prostitution-related activities would have been decriminalized in Canada.

In response, in June 2014, the government introduced Bill C-36, the *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act* (the Act), and it has now been passed. The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network has produced a number of documents relating to the new Act, which can be found on the Legal Network's website: www.aidslaw.ca/site/our-work/sex-work/.

We believe not only that the Act runs contrary to the Supreme Court decision in *Bedford*, but that it will have extremely serious and negative consequences for the health, safety and human rights of sex workers.

We strongly oppose the new Act.

Social Assistance

Rate Increases



As we reported in our *HALCO news/brief Summer 2014* newsletter, the 2014 Ontario Government Budget included some increases to Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW) rates.

OW and ODSP recipients began to receive these increases in their benefits at the end of September 2014:

- \$12 per month increase to ODSP basic needs allowance for people with disabilities (no increase for their non-disabled family members and no increase to maximum ODSP shelter amounts).
- \$8 per month increase to the ODSP board and lodge rate for persons with a disability.
- \$30 per month increase to basic needs allowance for single OW recipients without children.
- 1% increase to OW basic needs, OW shelter maximums and OW board/lodge rate for: couples, recipients with dependent children, dependants with dependants, and financially independent adults living with parents.
- 1% increase to: OW Temporary Care Assistance, OW/ODSP Personal Needs Allowances, OW/ODSP budgetary requirements for residents of interval and transition homes, and OW/ODSP guide dog benefit.
- Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities maximum increased by \$5 per month.
- The OW/ODSP Northern Allowance was replaced by a new higher Remote Communities Allowance for clients living in communities north of the 50th parallel without year-round road access. The new allowance is an increase of \$50/month for the first recipient in a household and \$25 for each additional family member.

There were no increases to:

- the ODSP basic needs amounts for non-disabled family members of ODSP recipients
- the maximum shelter amounts under ODSP
- the maximum special diet and pregnancy/breast-feeding nutritional allowances for OW/ODSP.

Immigration/Refugee Law Updates

Changes to Definition of “Dependent Child”

The government has made changes to Canada’s immigration law that will affect people who want to bring their children to Canada.

In most cases, the law allows a person to include any “dependent children” in his or her application for permanent residence. The law also allows Canadian citizens and permanent residents to sponsor their dependent children to come to Canada.

The definition of “dependent child” was changed on August 1, 2014:

- The maximum age has been reduced to 18 years of age from the previous 21 years.
- Full-time students over age 18 are no longer eligible as dependent children.

Children who are 19 years of age or older and who are dependent on the parent because of a disability are still considered “dependent children” and can be sponsored.

The previous definition of dependent child (a child up to and including age 21 or older if your child has been in full-time school since turning age 22) can still apply to your application if:

- you applied to sponsor your children before August 1, 2014,
or
- you made a refugee claim before August 1, 2014, your refugee claim is accepted, and you are including the child in your application for permanent residence.



If you are living with HIV in Ontario, please contact HALCO for free legal advice (see back page for HALCO contact information).

Immigration/Refugee Law Updates continue on page 11

Interim Federal Health Program Update

In June 2012, the federal government made cuts to the Interim Federal Health Program (IFH). The IFH is the public health care program for refugee claimants and some refugees resettled from outside Canada. HIV medications, doctor's visits for HIV follow-up and blood work were and are still covered under the IFH system.



The cuts were challenged in court, and on July 4, 2014, the Federal Court ruled that the cuts violated the right against "cruel and unusual treatment" in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The federal government is appealing the ruling, but on November 5, 2014, the government announced that some of the 2012 cuts had been reversed.

Remember that you must renew your IFH coverage every year. Processing of IFH renewal applications is currently very delayed, and we recommend that you submit your IFH renewal application to Citizenship and Immigration Canada at least 12 weeks before the expiry date.

If you are living with HIV, are a refugee claimant or a former refugee claimant, and you have questions about your IFH coverage or health benefits, please contact HALCO.

Ontario Temporary Health Program (OTHP)

In response to the Interim Federal Health cuts (see above), the Ontario government began the Ontario Temporary Health Program (OTHP) on January 1, 2014. The OTHP includes:

- all necessary prescription drugs (if you cannot afford them), and
- most hospital, primary, specialist, laboratory, and diagnostic services in Ontario.

You are eligible for OTHP if you have valid IFH Program coverage and you are:

- a refugee claimant waiting for your refugee hearing, or
- a refused refugee claimant and you are still legally in Canada.

Your country of origin does not affect the OTHP. You must have valid IFH coverage to be eligible for the OTHP so you must continue to renew your IFH (see **Interim Federal Health Program Update** article above). Your doctor or health care provider is responsible for billing the Ontario Temporary Health Program.

Refugee claimants and refused refugee claimants who lost health coverage when the IFH was cut in June 2012 get most of those health services through the OTHP.

New refugee claimants are eligible for the OTHP after they have been living in Ontario for three months (after making their refugee claim). The three month waiting period does not apply to children under 18 years of age, pregnant women, and people with an urgent or essential medical condition that requires treatment.

Canadian Citizenship Law Update

On June 19, 2014, the Parliament of Canada passed Bill C-24, the *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act*. The law makes several changes to citizenship applications, including changes to the right of appeal and the length of residence in Canada. It also makes it possible for Canadian citizenship to be taken away from some citizens who engage in terrorism or acts of treason.



The change to the required length of residence is not in effect yet, but will probably come into effect by the end of May 2015. Currently, to be eligible to apply for citizenship, a permanent resident of Canada must have been legally in Canada for at least three years out of the last four years and must have been a permanent resident for at least two years. Each day that the person lived legally in Canada **before** becoming a permanent resident counts as half a day (for example living in Canada while the person's refugee claim is being decided). This means that the wait time to apply for citizenship for some people is as little as two years after becoming a permanent resident (two years as a permanent resident plus two years living legally in Canada before becoming a permanent resident).

Bill C-24 will change the law so that you will have to live in Canada as a permanent resident for at least four years before you can apply to become a Canadian citizen. This change is not in effect yet and the government has not formally announced the date, but the government has suggested that the change will come into effect by the end of May 2015.

It is important to get legal advice before you apply for Canadian citizenship if you were accepted as a refugee in Canada and:

- you have been back to the country that was the basis of your refugee claim or you have applied for a passport from that country,
- you were accepted as refugee by another country, or
- you misrepresented or did not disclose significant facts that were relevant to your refugee claim in Canada.

If you were accepted as a refugee in Canada you should not travel to your country or apply for a passport from your country until you get legal advice.

If you were accepted as a refugee in Canada and you have travelled to your country or applied for a passport from your country, you should get legal advice before you apply for Canadian citizenship.

If you are living with HIV in Ontario and have been a permanent resident of Canada for at least two years, please contact HALCO for advice about making a citizenship application. We can give you advice, explain the requirements, and review your application before you send it. Please see back page for HALCO contact information.

Medical Marijuana Updates

Lawsuit Appeal will be heard in November

As we reported in our *HALCO news Winter 2013-2014* newsletter:

- The *Marihuana Medical Access Regulations* (MMAR) were replaced by a new system called the *Marihuana for Medical Purposes Regulations* (MMPR).
- The new MMPR came into effect in June 2013 but some of the old MMAR provisions were still the law until March 31, 2014 (some authorizations and licenses have been extended - see below).
- There is a lawsuit that is challenging the new MMPR.

In March 2014, the Federal Court of Canada made an interim order in the lawsuit. This interim order means that most people who had valid MMAR licences to use and/or grow medical marijuana can continue to use their licences until a decision is made in the lawsuit.

The Medical Use of Marijuana page on the government of Canada website is

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/marihuana/index-eng.php

The government website indicates that because of the lawsuit and court decisions, Health Canada will consider the following authorizations and licences as being extended until a decision is made in the lawsuit:

- Authorizations to Possess (ATP) under the MMAR that were valid on March 21, 2014, BUT the maximum quantity of dried marihuana authorized for possession is the amount in the licence or 150 grams, whichever is less.
- Personal-Use Production Licences or Designated-Person Production Licences under the MMAR that were valid on or after September 30, 2013, where there is also an associated ATP that was valid as of March 21, 2014.

This court order is in effect until a decision is made after the trial of the lawsuit. The government of Canada appealed the interim order, and the appeal will be heard by the Federal Court of Appeal in 2015. The actual lawsuit against the MMPR will be heard by the Federal Court in February 2015.

If you do not meet the above requirements, you may be eligible to register under the new MMPR. The Health Canada website has more information about registration under the MMPR:

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/marihuana/index-eng.php.

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/marihuana/info/faq-eng.php.

For more information about the lawsuit, or to keep updated, you can visit the website of the law firm that is handling the lawsuit: <http://johnconroy.com/mmar.htm>.

Medical Marijuana Updates continue on page 14

Medical marijuana should not be limited to dry form (*R. v Smith*)

The former *Marihuana Medical Access Regulations* (MMAR) and the new *Marihuana for Medical Purposes Regulations* (MMPR) both limit medical marijuana to dried form for authorized users.

In August 2014, the British Columbia Court of Appeal released its decision in *R. v Smith*, finding that the former MMAR's restriction related to dried marijuana is unconstitutional. The MMAR does not allow the use of other forms of cannabis to treat symptoms of serious illness. The decision finds that the MMAR should allow edible forms of marijuana (teas, oils, cookies, etc.). The government of Canada has appealed this decision to the Supreme Court of Canada. The hearing is scheduled for March 2015.

The effect of the Court's decision is suspended for one year to allow Canada's Parliament time to decide how to amend the law. You can read the decision on the Court's website:

www.courts.gov.bc.ca/jdb-txt/CA/14/03/2014BCCA0322.htm.

Breach of Privacy of Medical Marijuana Program Participants

As we reported in our *HALCO news Winter 2013-2014* newsletter, Health Canada sent a mailing to medical marijuana recipients in envelopes that indicated the recipient's name, mailing address and *Medical Marihuana Access Program*. The mailing was sent in November 2013 to approximately 40,000 people.

A law firm in British Columbia filed an application to start a class action on behalf of these recipients asking for damages for breach of privacy. If the court allows this class action to proceed then all recipients of the mailing will automatically be part of the law suit (unless you notify the law firm that you do not want to be part of the class action). There are now several law firms involved in the lawsuit. It is not necessary to register to be part of the class action. However, people who register will receive updates about the class action. To find out how to register or for more information, you can visit:

www.branchmacmaster.com/medical-marihuana/.

If you are living with HIV in Ontario and have questions, please contact us for free legal advice (see back page for HALCO contact information).

Medical Marijuana Updates continue on page 15

Proposed amendments to the *Marihuana for Medical Purposes Regulations (MMPR)* and the *Narcotic Control Regulations*

The government is proposing amendments that would require licensed producers of medical marijuana to provide reports to provincial/territorial medical and nursing licensing authorities about doctors and nurses who authorize marijuana for their patients.

The reports would include:

- healthcare practitioner information (name, address and professional licence number)
- the date the document was signed by the practitioner
- the daily quantity of dried marijuana authorized and period of use
- basic patient information (name and date of birth).

The licensing authorities would also be able to make a request for this information in the course of an investigation.

The government says that the reporting will improve the ability of the licensing authorities to:

- provide education, support and feedback to healthcare practitioners
- conduct broad reviews and analysis
- monitor their members and maintain standards of practice
- identify potential misuse
- take appropriate action against members, for example conduct an investigation or discipline a member.

The government also says that access to basic patient information would improve the licensing authorities' ability to monitor for high dosages, multiple medical authorizations and multiple registrations with licensed producers.

Under the current MMPR, the licensing authorities may request information about a specific healthcare practitioner from licensed producers in the course of a professional investigation. There is no requirement or authorization for licensed producers to share information about all healthcare practitioners who support medical marijuana for their patients or information about their patients.

HALCO does not support these proposed amendments to the MMPR.

Getting Legal Help

If you are living with HIV in Ontario, please contact us for free legal information and advice. Please see back page for HALCO contact information.

HALCO's Public Legal Education Workshops

As always, our staff continue to provide legal education workshops for groups and organizations across Ontario. Also, twice a year, we hold a series of workshops in our boardroom and our current series is taking place in November and December 2014.

Please contact us or visit the **Public Legal Education** section of our website for more information: www.halco.org/our-services/public-legal-education.

Our workshop legal topics include:

- Criminalization of HIV Non-Disclosure
- HIV Legal Issues Overview
- HIV and Immigration Law
- HIV and Privacy Law
- HIV and Private Insurance
- HIV and Employment Law
- Medical Marijuana
- Planning for illness: legal information for people living with HIV in Ontario
- Powers of Attorney and Advance Care Planning
- Government Sources of Income for Individuals and Families
- Disability Tax Credits and Registered Disability Savings Plans
- Ontario's Drug Benefit Programs

Please contact us if you would like to request a workshop or our participation in an event (please see back page for HALCO contact information).

HALCO's website: www.halco.org

Our **What's New** website sidebar helps keep you up-to-date on current issues, announcements, events, and more.

Our **Areas of Law** pages include information about many different legal topics: www.halco.org/areas-of-law.

You can apply to become a member of HALCO or to renew your HALCO membership:

www.halco.org/getinvolved/membership.

If you have any questions about our website, please contact us!



HALCO People

HALCO Staff

- **Amy Wah** (staff lawyer)
- **Ashley Jacobs** (articling student)
- **Bill Merryweather** (director of admin.)
- **Jennifer Hild** (admin. assistant-temp.)
- **Jill McNall** (community legal worker)
- **John Nelson** (staff lawyer)
- **John Norquay** (staff lawyer)
- **Meagan Johnston** (staff lawyer)
- **Renée Lang** (staff lawyer)
- **Rick Lobodzinski** (admin. assistant)
- **Ryan Peck** (executive director/lawyer)

HALCO Board of Directors

HALCO's skilled and dedicated volunteer board members oversee our governance and provide direction:

- **Laura Bisailon**
- **Michael Capp**
- **Eric Cashmore**
- **John McCallum**
- **Eric Mykhalovski**
- **Barbara Ncho**
- **Scott Nickerson**
- **Judith Odhiambo**, and
- **Andrew Paizee**

For more information about our board and board committees, please contact us or visit **Get Involved** on our website:

www.halco.org/get-involved

Law Student Volunteers

- **Sherna Tamboly** (2014-2015)
- **Faria Marlatt** (2013-2014)
- **Petra Molnar Diop** (2013-2014)
- **Alex Soutter** (2013-2014)

HALCO
HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario

HALCO Membership

HALCO's work is supported by our 175 members. HALCO membership is free and renewed annually.

Our primary goal is to provide free legal services to people living with HIV/AIDS in Ontario. To help us to fulfill our goal and to ensure that our services are relevant, we need the participation of people living with HIV/AIDS in Ontario, as well as those who are not living with HIV/AIDS.

To become a member: you must be a resident of Ontario who is 16 years of age or older and you must agree with our ***Statement of Principles*** (see page 19).

As a member of HALCO, you will have the right to participate in and vote at our General Meetings, and to stand for election to our volunteer Board of Directors. Membership takes effect when it is approved by the Board of Directors. Only members in good standing who have been members for at least 30 days before the meeting may vote at a membership meeting.

You can also choose to receive other HALCO information, including our newsletter. We will only share your membership information as required by law.

Please offer your support by becoming a member of HALCO!

You can apply for HALCO membership or renew your HALCO membership:

- on our HALCO website: www.halco.org/get-involved/membership
- by contacting us to ask for a membership application form by mail (for HALCO contact information please see back page).

Statement of Principles of the HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario

**Adopted January 30, 2006, by the Board of Directors
of the HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario.**

It is agreed that:

- 1. People living with HIV/AIDS are confronted with unique legal problems of enormous proportions and complexity;**
- 2. Those best equipped to make choices regarding HIV/AIDS issues and problems are those individuals who are HIV positive themselves;**
- 3. People living with HIV/AIDS must have control over their own lives;**
- 4. The HIV/AIDS affected communities are very diverse and are confronted by overwhelming challenges derived from both their diversity and from their common experience as people living with HIV/AIDS;**
- 5. It is necessary to create and foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of people living with HIV/AIDS; and**
- 6. The confidentiality, bodily security, autonomy and privacy of people living with HIV/AIDS must be respected, which include but are not limited to:**
 - a) the right of individuals to exercise control over their own medical treatment;**
 - b) the right of individuals to exercise control over decisions concerning their own socio-economic position;**
 - c) the right of all persons living with HIV/AIDS to be fully informed of all processes and procedures in which their interests are in any way involved; and**
 - d) the right of all persons living with HIV/AIDS to consent, or withhold their consent, in all matters affecting them.**

Getting Legal Help

If you are living with HIV in Ontario, please contact us for free legal information and advice.

Others in Ontario can contact their local community legal clinic:
www.legalaid.on.ca/clinics.

HALCO provides intake for new inquiries on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (not Wednesdays). A HALCO caseworker is assigned to deal with new inquiries each intake day.

HALCO is a “scent-reduced environment”: please avoid wearing scented products when coming to our offices. Help us to make HALCO more comfortable for everyone!

HALCO is a registered charity funded by Legal Aid Ontario, the AIDS Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and other sources including corporate, foundation and individual donors. We welcome donations.

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