

## **Women and AIDS: The Forgotten Epidemic**

**January 19, 2006**

Toronto, ON. – According to Health Canada, heterosexual sex is the main risk factor for HIV infection in women, followed closely by injecting drug use. Women accounted for 25 per cent of HIV-positive diagnoses in Toronto in 2002, the most recent year for which data is available. Within that group, women from countries with high rates of HIV infection (so-called “HIV-endemic” countries) accounted for a disproportionately high number of diagnoses, about 45 per cent.

Louise Binder is a woman with HIV/AIDS and openly shares her story, and her commitment to activism, with others. Louise Binder brings her unique understanding of gender and HIV/AIDS to the Women’s Health Matters Forum and Expo on **Friday, January 20, 2006, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** Her talk, Are Women Becoming an “Endangered Species” Due to the AIDS Epidemic? will be followed by a powerful drama presentation called “Hope is Vital: Prevention and Stigma of HIV/AIDS”.

Louise Binder will address current news surrounding Microbicides as a protector against an HIV-like virus. A lawyer by training, current resident living in Toronto with HIV/AIDS and a recent recipient of the Commemorative Medal for the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Louise Binder brings her unique understanding of gender and a profound sense of urgency to the issues of women living with HIV/AIDS.

Louise is currently chair of the Canadian Treatment Action Council and Voices of Positive Women, and Co-Chair on the Canadian government's Ministerial Council on HIV/AIDS while she also sits on the Community Advisory Committee of the Canadian Trials Network and the HIV/AIDS Ethics Review Committee of University of Toronto. Louise has been honoured with several awards for her volunteer service including an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws from her alma mater, Queen's University and, most recently, the Commemorative Medal for the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Celebrating its tenth successful year, Women’s Health Matters Forum and Expo is a two-day interactive consumer and health provider event for women and men of all ages. The event provides current facts, fresh perspectives and new information on hot issues in the ever-changing women’s health environment. There will be more than 50 presentations by medical experts and health professionals. In addition the expo offers 200 exhibits featuring products, services and information about women’s health.

To obtain media passes for the Forum & Expo, please contact Kathy Cox, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Communications & Stakeholder Relations at 416.480.4040 or email [kathy.cox@sunnybrook.ca](mailto:kathy.cox@sunnybrook.ca). You can also visit the Forum's official web site [www.womenshealthmatters.ca/forum](http://www.womenshealthmatters.ca/forum)