

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

AIDS Activists Demand Universal Access to Clean Needles to Mark the International Day of Remembrance of People Who Use Drugs

Banner drop raises awareness on lack of access to harm reduction programs

#endAIDS

July 20, 2012 – Washington, DC – Washington National Baseball Game

Calling for political action to end the global HIV/AIDS epidemic and acknowledging the International Day of Remembrance of People Who Use Drugs on July 21st, activists dropped a banner stating “Clean Needles Stops AIDS” at Friday night’s Washington Nationals baseball game. The demonstration comes just days before opening of the AIDS 2012, the XIX International AIDS Conference being held at the Washington D.C. Convention Centre and the ***We Can End AIDS Massive Mobilization for Economic Justice and Human Rights March on July 24th***.

“Laws that criminalize drugs and moralistic policies are furthering the HIV epidemic and killing people who use drugs”, says Zoe Dodd of Canada’s AIDS ACTION NOW! – a direct-action activist group working to realize the human rights of people most affected by HIV. “There is a clear correlation between laws that criminalize drugs and high rates of HIV among people who inject drugs. Harm reduction programs save lives and will help end AIDS” Dodd stated.

This action draws attention to the recent report from the Global Commission on HIV and the Law, the independent high-level commission that finds that bad laws and human rights abuses are stifling the global AIDS response. The landmark report finds evidence that enforcing punitive laws hinders HIV responses and wastes resources. The Commission urgently calls for laws that protect human rights to save lives, save money and end the epidemic.

“Government inaction and stigmatizing attitudes are threatening people’s survival”, says Jessica Whitbread, an HIV-positive activist from AIDS ACTION NOW! “Vital evidence-informed harm reduction programs- like distributing clean needles to people who use drugs will save lives”.

During the XIX International AIDS Conference, AIDS ACTION NOW! mobilizing Canadian delegates at the AIDS conference and is part of an coalition of international organizations who will participate in the ***We Can End AIDS Massive Mobilization for Economic Justice and Human Rights***. On July 24th at NOON, the march will take over five main streets of DC, including K Street, New York Avenue, and Pennsylvania Avenue and culminate at the White House Gates.

Photos of the action available on Flickr:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/58474306@N02/sets/72157630674772802/>

FOR CANADIAN CONTACTS & INFO:
Alex McClelland, AIDS ACTION NOW: +1 438 938 2756, mcclelland.alex@gmail.com

FOR U.S. CONTACTS & INFO:
Julie Davids, HIV Prevention Justice Alliance: 646-431-7525, jdavids@aidschicago.org

AIDS ACTION NOW!
www.aidsactionnow.org

@AIDSActionNow

We Can End AIDS Massive Mobilization for Economic Justice and Human Rights
www.wecanendaids.org
@WeCanEndAIDS

Global Commission on HIV and the Law
www.hivlawcommission.org