



TORONTO PEOPLE WITH AIDS FOUNDATION
STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2023

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WE HONOUR AND UNDERSTAND
WE LISTEN AND LEARN
WE CONNECT AND GROW
WE TAKE ACTION



ELEVATE OUR ROLE AS THE PHA HUB.

WE HONOUR AND UNDERSTAND. WHAT WE KNOW.

From the beginning, PWA has had the honour and responsibility of holding the powerful stories and voices of those living with HIV and those who died from HIV/AIDS. They are our stories and our voices. Together, a response, a community and an agency was created to provide support to people living with HIV. Thirty years later, PWA celebrated that rich history and impact while looking to the future as we engaged in a strategic planning process for the years ahead.

The strategic planning process was aimed at sharpening our focus for the next 5 years and exploring PWA's role within the changing environment of HIV. The process spanned over 8 months and included the engagement of a core planning team made up of leaders, staff, volunteers, clients and board members who interviewed various stakeholders from across the PWA community. In addition to the interviews, we conducted focus groups with clients, volunteers, donors and partners to explore two key questions related to the changing environment:

- What is most essential/unique to PWA? What essential niche do we fill?
- How do we ensure that PHAs and our communities are well served into the future?

In total over 125 voices helped shape our new strategic plan and core direction for the future.

As a final step in our strategy process, in January 2018, we took all of the input from the engagement process and translated it into a strategy framework. Staff, board members, clients and volunteers came together to create a guiding vision and core areas of focus for the future.

THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT OF HIV AND AIDS

Our planning process took place with a backdrop of significant change in HIV and the AIDS service sector. We paid attention to 3 key themes of change in our environment:



U=U: UNDETECTABLE = UNTRANSMITTABLE

With the widely accepted notion that when a PHA's viral load is undetectable, HIV is virtually untransmittable, many questions and opportunities have emerged. With the advancement of treatment, research and pre-exposure prophylactics, HIV continues to evolve as a chronic disease that people can manage while living rich, meaningful and long lives. As these developments have gained traction in our community, it has raised the question: "what does it mean to have HIV today?" and, whether our community needs the same kind of support. Interestingly, what we heard from clients and community members was that despite developments, the stigma of HIV continues to be a significant barrier and the need for a safe space for people with HIV to come and be supported with a community of peers continues to be essential. U=U is a great advancement for our community but it has also shifted public perception about the support we provide to those in our community who continue to need practical support and assistance with navigating the health and social service systems.

Despite all of the advances in HIV and AIDS research, treatment and care, the need continues to be essential. PWA continues to welcome newly diagnosed people with HIV each week and often, these people come from communities that have been traditionally marginalized in our society increasing the complexity of their experience and journey to wellness.

OUR AGING POPULATION

For many people aging with HIV/AIDS, their journey has been marked by harrowing moments. Whether diagnosed early or later in life, those aging with HIV have often experienced unimaginable loss and unexpected returns to life. They have had to demand their rights as people living with HIV and AIDS, and often create their own services. They created the HIV sector, and it's time for the HIV sector to work with them to create new services for HIV+ seniors as we move into the next phase of HIV in Toronto. Together with aging PHAs, we, as the PHA Hub, along with other community agencies, will co-lead the establishment of a comprehensive response for people aging with HIV and AIDS. It will connect health supports with community supports to address the financial, housing, medical, psycho-social and community needs of people aging with HIV and AIDS.

PHA Hub and Aging: *To assist individuals in optimizing healthy aging with HIV over the lifespan. This includes maximizing physical, social, mental and emotional health and well-being living with HIV and other concurrent health conditions.*

EVOLVING EXPECTATIONS FROM OUR FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

The HIV/AIDS sector has continued to evolve in recent years with increased expectations around our performance. Our sector has stepped up asserting the important role we play within the prevention paradigm and in the broader health and social service system. We have recognized that as AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs) we need to drive value for our clients and the health system providing the most cost effective, impactful service delivery that we can. The AIDS Bureau, the Ontario HIV/AIDS Strategy, the MOHLTC and the Toronto Central LHIN have put new expectations on us as an agency. We recognize that we play a key role in supporting the most efficient use of system resources and can be a driver for optimal collaboration for service and care delivery in Toronto.



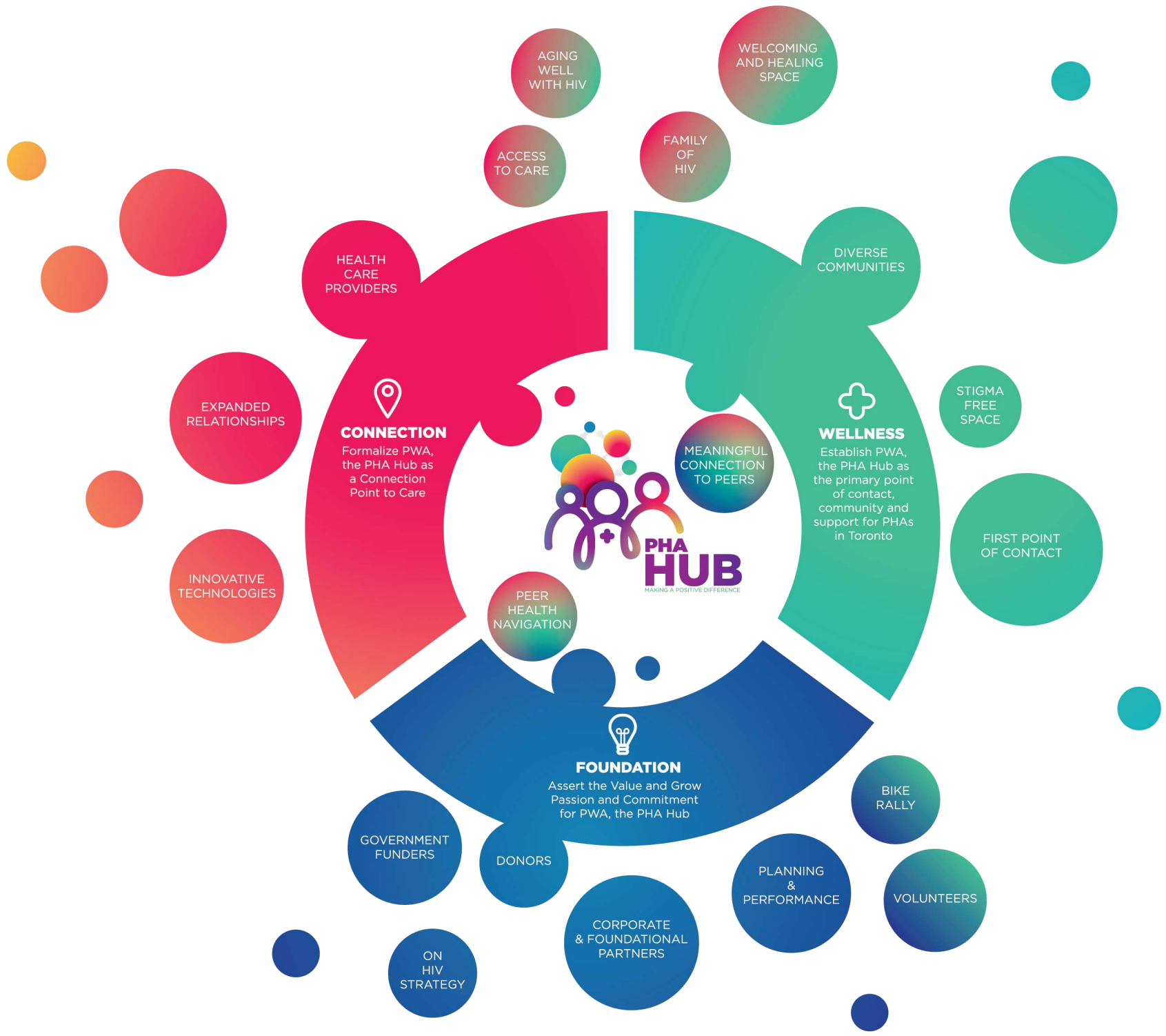
WE LISTENED. WHAT WE HEARD.

OUR STRENGTHS AS AN ORGANIZATION

Throughout our engagement, we heard remarkable consistency in terms of what people value most about our agency and what we provide to our community. Six themes were reinforced by almost all voices:

- **Welcoming Safe Space / Community / Hope** - PWA is well known as a safe welcoming space for all communities. Clients and volunteers from diverse backgrounds consistently share a sense that PWA is a safe space for all. While many clients choose to receive some of their services elsewhere, there is a widespread feeling that PWA is open to everyone and that by being together as a community, we create a sense of hope for one another.
- **Immediate Practical Support** - Clients, staff and volunteers point to the incredible value of practical supports provided for clients. From financial support (e.g. reimbursements of medical expenses) to basic needs like food and access to medication, PWA is known for getting immediate results for clients.
- **Connecting to Services** - PWA is also well known as an essential connector to key social and health services in Toronto for PHAs. Working with partner organizations such as ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program) so that their staff provides services physically at PWA helps people make essential connections that transform their experience, health and well-being.
- **Opportunities to Connect and Engage with Peers / Learning and Support** - Almost everyone who engages with PWA is enveloped into a community of support, connection and learning. The focus on community within the organization and the essential role played by peers with lived experience create an environment that is rich with connections, caring and support.
“Peer”: PWA defines a Peer as a person living with HIV involved in a specific role where their personal HIV disclosure and shared lived experience is an expected contribution for the success and impact of their work.
- **Volunteering Here is Really Meaningful** - Volunteers at PWA have a unique experience of giving back while at the same time gaining enrichment in their own lives. From Bike Rally participants to the over 100 regular volunteers, the volunteer experience at PWA is rich, meaningful and therapeutic.





OPPORTUNITIES / THINGS TO PAY ATTENTION TO FOR THE FUTURE

Our stakeholders also shared many important matters for us to continue to pay attention to:

- Supporting clients with mental health and substance use needs
- Support with access to clinical care and adherence
- Concerns about ongoing funding for practical supports that clients depend upon
- Public / community and donor awareness and visibility - there is a need to be even more clear about the unique role of PWA and why the services continue to be so vital
- The needs of unique populations including youth, trans and indigenous communities
- The desire for “one stop” shopping for programs and services

A CALL TO ACTION

We heard from our stakeholders that PWA plays an essential role with the HIV environment in Toronto. As the ASO serving the largest number of people living with HIV, PWA is a natural hub for PHAs within the sector, providing the following value:

- **Connector and navigator** - Many people with HIV need practical support and direction to help them manage the changing and often complex needs. We have been playing a hub and navigation role for a long time helping our clients connect to services, care and to other ASOs with specialized focus - for many we are their first stop on their journey.
- **Prevention / harm reduction** - We already play an important role creating conditions that help to keep people healthy and prevent transmission of HIV.
- **Supporting our aging population** - We have a key role to play to better understand and support the needs of PHAs as they age.
- **System lens / Efficient use of dollars for meaningful impact** - Our practical supports and connections with other services help clients to stay on their feet and reduce their need for more costly care and services.



WE CONNECT AND GROW. STRATEGIC PLAN GUIDING VISION TO 2023

PWA's PHA Hub will be known and recognized as the primary hub for all PHAs in the City of Toronto. The PHA Hub will provide a **welcoming and healing space, practical services and connection to critical services and engagement within PWA's Family of HIV community.**

Through PWA's PHA Hub, PHAs will be more connected to care and community and more supported in their ongoing efforts to achieve and maintain optimal health and well-being.

PHAs from diverse communities and with a wide range of needs will have access to essential information to help navigate health and social services, rich and meaningful connection to peers, concrete connections to facilitate timely and appropriate connections to health and social services.

PWA's PHA Hub will create opportunities and structure for increased Peer-based programming and more concrete partnerships with other AIDS Service Organizations and healthcare providers. We will work with our partners to support PHAs to access services and support in person, through virtual connections and through self-management tools available on line.

PWA will be a key force for creating the conditions that improve quality of life, support adherence and prevention of HIV. PWA will also be a leader in demonstrating that providing support to proactively improve health for people living with HIV creates greater individual and community outcomes and increases efficiencies in health service delivery.

We will leverage our welcoming and healing space and our role and expertise in providing practical services to create a formal PHA Hub that utilizes our focus and approach to create stronger connections to broader health and social systems. When someone is newly diagnosed, seeking support, dealing with changes in their life, PWA's PHA Hub will provide a safe and healing place where they can come to seek services, find community and make connections and trusting relationships to support their health and well-being.

“Family of HIV”: The Family of HIV is the healing and welcoming community created by the many people who've been a part of PWA throughout its 30 years. This sense of family comes from the enormous stigma and unbelievable challenges many living with HIV and AIDS have had to face. Without traditional families, many had to turn to one another to get the support typically found only from family. From this, a family for all was created that accepts every one living with and affected by HIV to be their authentic selves, receive critical support and become engaged in a healing and welcoming community.



ONE CORE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Elevate PWA as the Core Hub and Connector for PHAs in the City of Toronto

- THE PHA HUB

DEFINING THE PHA HUB

PWA's new strategic direction responds to the diverse needs of stakeholders and situates the PHA Hub as the primary point of contact for all PHAs in the City of Toronto. PHAs are supported in achieving optimal health and well-being through the PHA Hub's welcoming and healing space; meaningful engagement with Peers, volunteers and staff; access to practical supports; and the connection point to care.

THREE AREAS FOR ACTION

This core strategic direction will be supported by activity in 3 areas:

A. Establish PWA's PHA Hub as the primary point of contact, community and support for PHAs in Toronto

GOALS:

- Refine our public facing communication and engagement to align with our strategy and more focused role as primary point of contact, community and support for any one referring PHAs to services in the City of Toronto
- Grow our role as part of the 'Family of HIV' welcoming diverse communities of peers and creating a stigma free space
- Continue to champion PHA health and well-being supported by practical services as a critical aspect of community health, the HIV prevention paradigm and prevention of co-morbidities
- Increase intentional links between support received through PWA's PHA Hub and greater success in ongoing, holistic health and well-being



B. Formalize PWA's PHA Hub as a Connection Point to Care

GOALS:

- Leverage PWA's practical services and PHA Hub to strengthen streamlined, supported access to care
- Establish a direct link between PWA and health care providers (physicians, social workers, pharmacists, nurses, and rehabilitation professionals etc .), with a particular focus on healthy aging with HIV over one's lifespan.
- Establish a community and clinical standard for referral processes to PWA's PHA Hub as the first point of contact for PHAs accessing care
- Develop expanded expertise and trusted relationships with external services and supports
- Identify and formalize PWA's role and contribution to broader health system planning
- Expand the role of peers as a key component of service navigation and support;
- Create opportunities to expand our reach through innovative technology such as virtual connections to community, information and practical supports. Explore synergistic partnerships beyond the GTA in these efforts.

C. Assert the Value and Grow Passion and Commitment for PWA's PHA Hub

GOALS:

- Increase meaningful engagement opportunities between stakeholders (clients, volunteers, donors) to deepen understanding, commitment and passion
- Establish and promote the value of providing practical services and supports, community connections and navigation supports
- Grow our capacity to demonstrate that providing support to proactively improve health for people living with HIV creates greater individual and community outcomes and increases efficiencies in health service delivery.
- Integrate planning and performance tools that measure outcomes, and health-economic impact
- Build on the foundations of quality, consistency and accountability across our agency
- Cultivate and strengthen our resources for sustainability and growth by deepening the agency culture of philanthropy, enhancing donor experience, and providing engagement opportunities across the agency

“Culture of Philanthropy”: *A culture of philanthropy means the organization (not just the development department) values philanthropy and sees it as part of the mission*





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