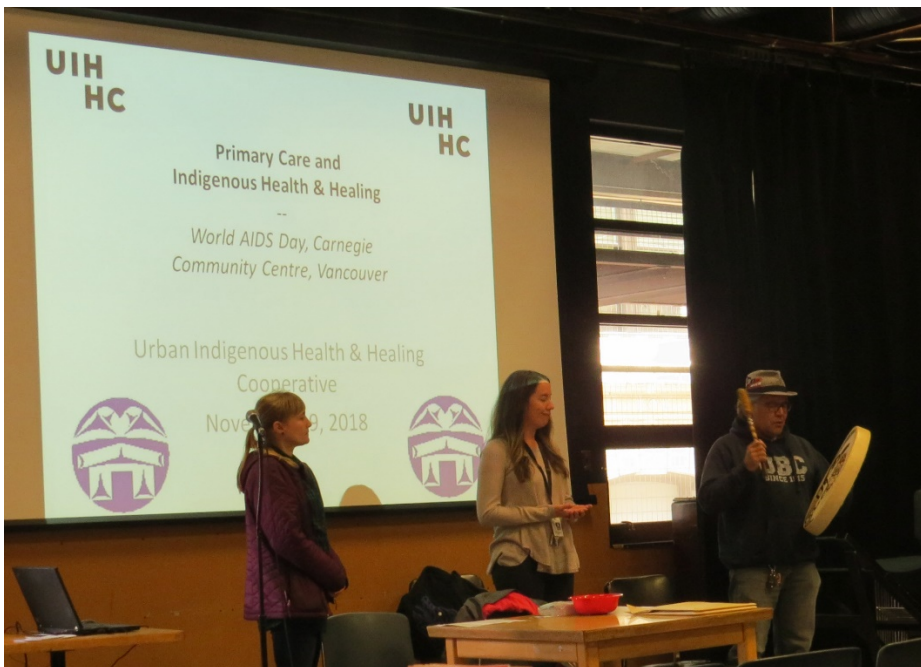


Celebrating 25 Years of World AIDS Day in Vancouver!

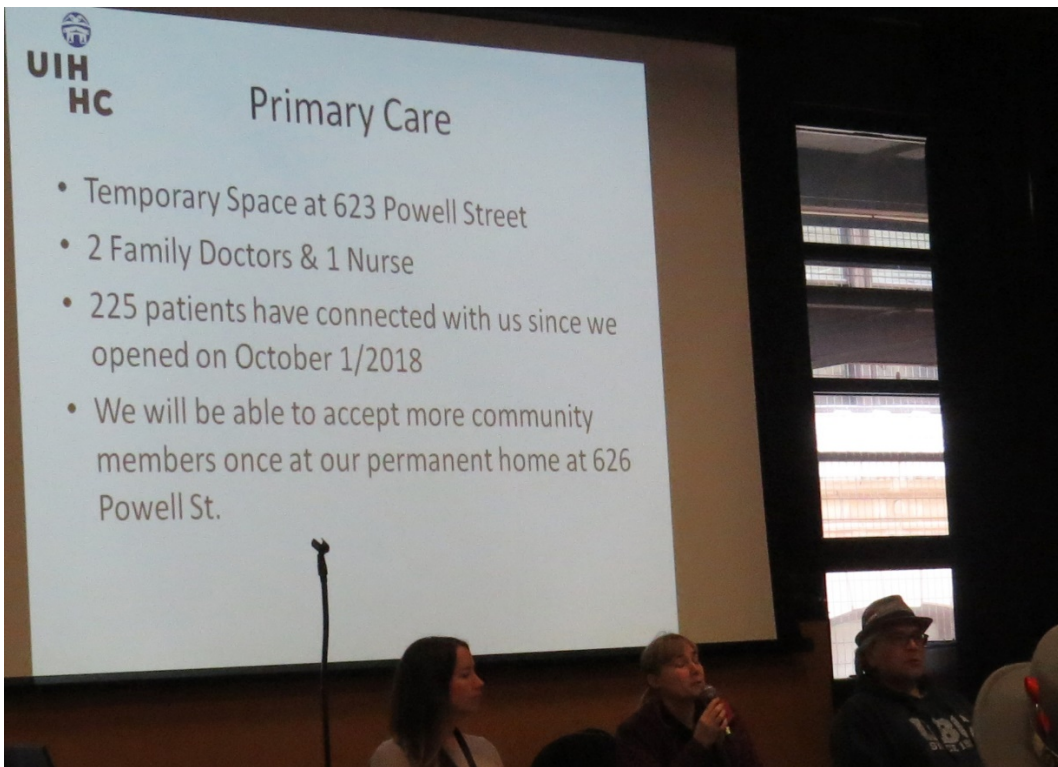
The 25th (!!!) annual World AIDS Day Vancouver event took place on November 29, 2018 at the Carnegie Centre. This was actually the 30th annual World AIDS Day, but the event was not held in Vancouver the first 5 years. Meals, snacks, and prizes attracted many Downtown Eastside guests who stayed to hear the speeches, participate in games, visit the info booths, and get tested.



Brandon Laviolette, the Treatment, Health, and Wellness Coordinator at Positive Living BC, spoke about the many services offered to HIV+ people at his organization. Presentation was on "Know Your Status, Know the Law."



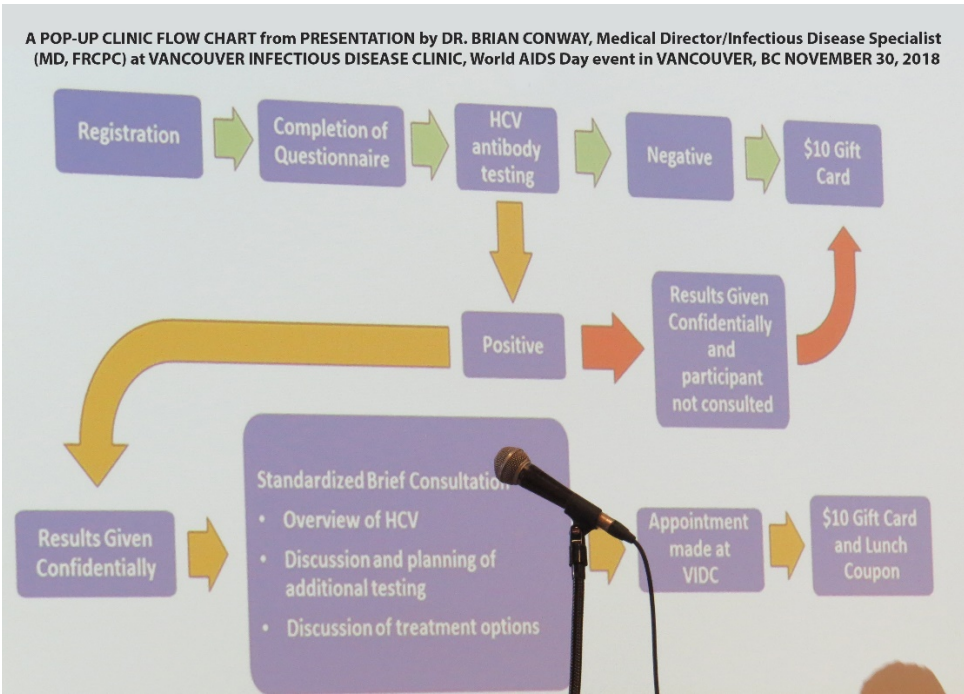
What is UIHHC? Urban Indigenous Health and Healing Cooperative gives the Downtown Eastside a cooperative clinic focused on urban indigenous health and healing. L>R Gretta Pauls, Jennifer Dahomy, and Elder Bruce Robinson. UIHHC (Primary Care at 623 Powell St., other services at 44 East Cordova St.) joins the Lu'ma Native Medical Centre (2970 Nanaimo St.) in providing welcome integrated health services to Vancouver's indigenous population.



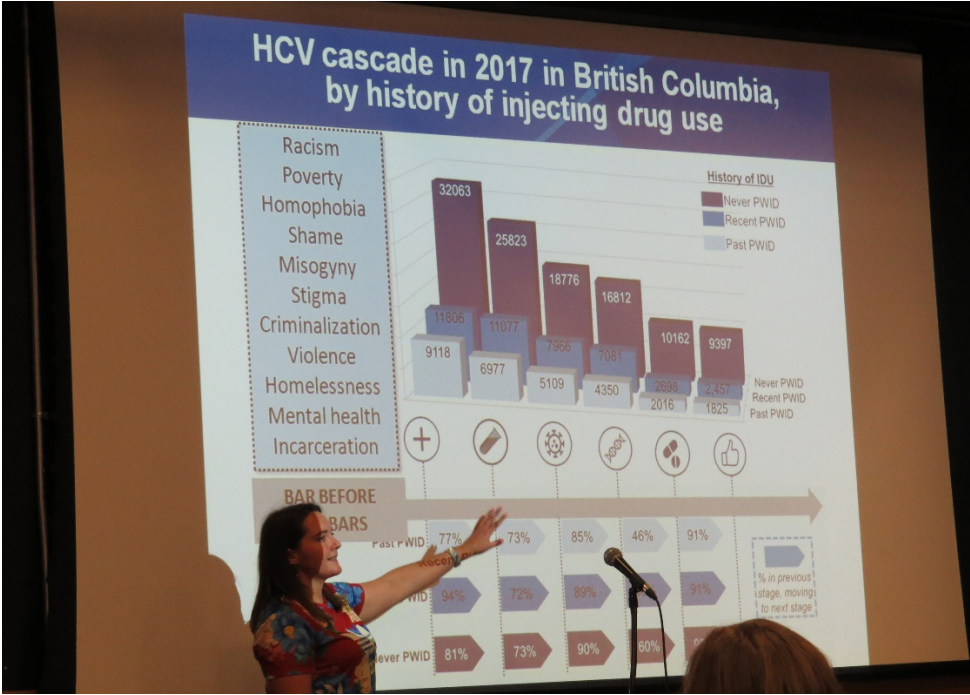
UIHHC offers traditional indigenous healing, primary care (2 doctors and a nurse) and alternative avenues of healing. For more information see: www.uihhc.ca.



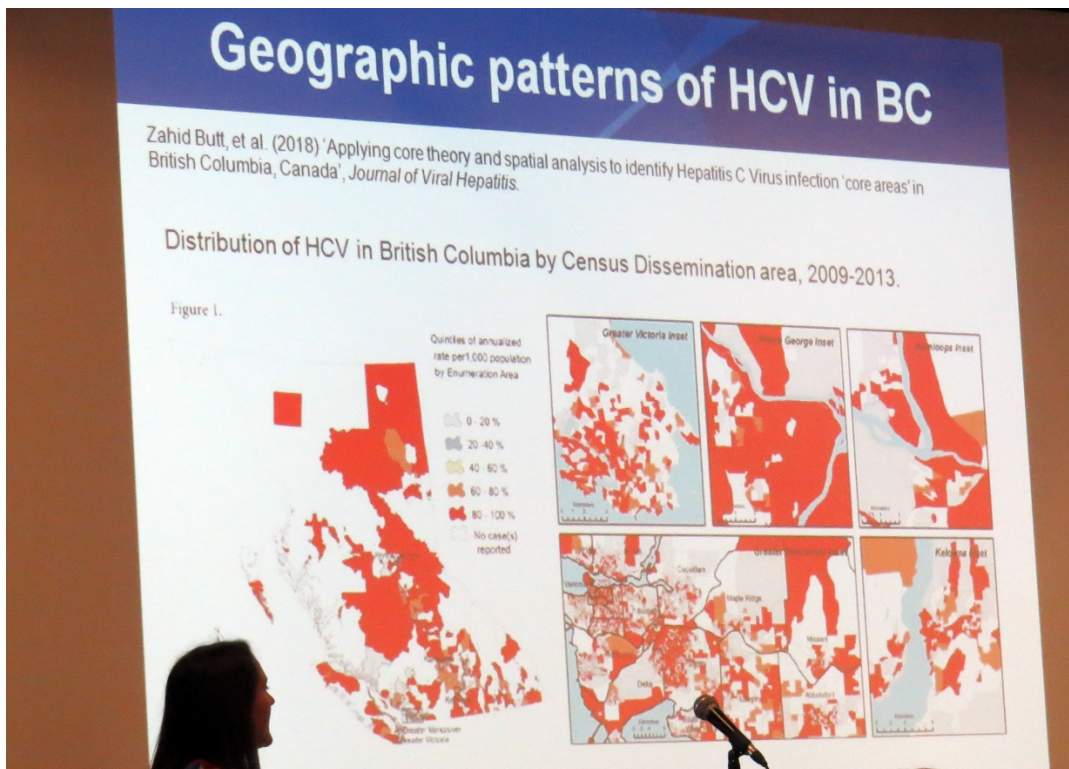
Jennifer Dahomy explained how UIHHC is guided by elders within Vancouver's urban indigenous community, valued for the leadership skills, collective wisdom, and capacity for compassion and devotion they have accumulated through the years. Elders generally view mental illness as rooted in disconnection from families, traditions, and communities, the land, and from one's own self and spirit. Healing requires the re-establishment of these connections. Elders and health professionals, actively working together, make UIHHC work.



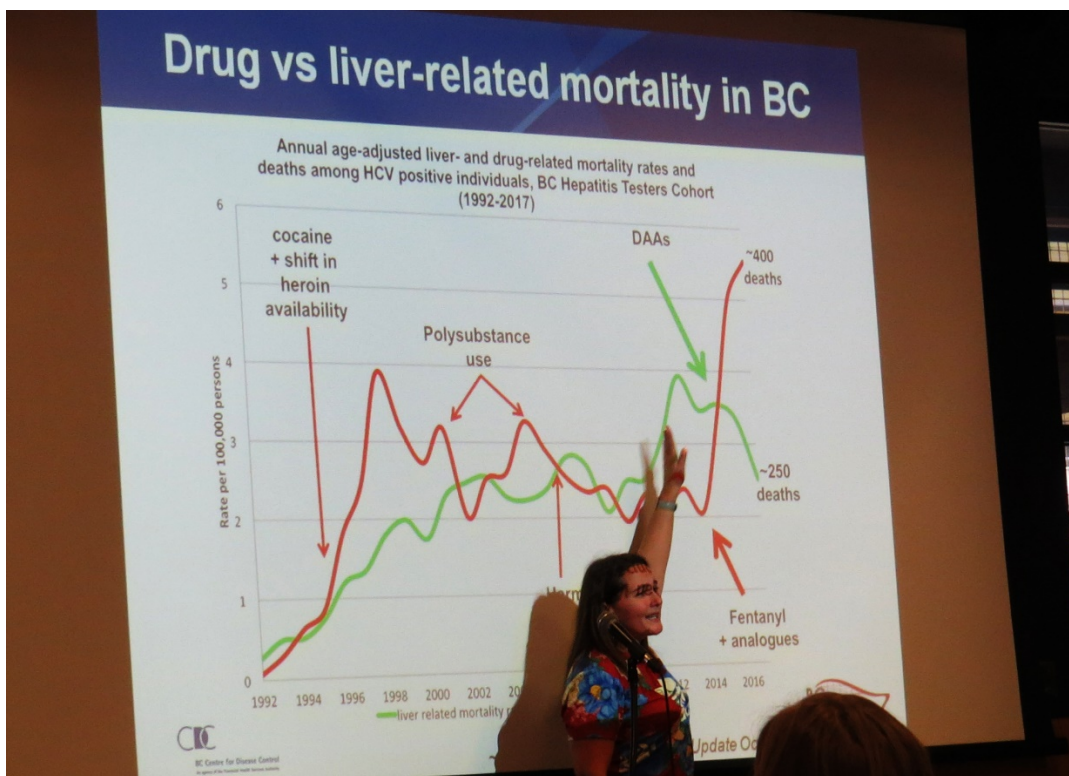
Hepatitis C Pop-Up Testing Clinic Flow Chart, presented by Dr. Brian Conway of Vancouver Infectious Disease Clinic (VIDC), specializing in “wrap-around care” for patients with viral hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, STBBIs, and related conditions at 1200 Burrard St. With the oral HCV Point-of-Care screening test, participants at VIDC’s ‘roaming’ pop-up clinics can be confidentially informed of their initial HCV test result within a few minutes. If they test positive, they receive counseling and an appointment is immediately made for a test to confirm that they actually are HCV+ (that they didn’t clear it on their own), and if indicated, get them started on treatment as soon as possible.



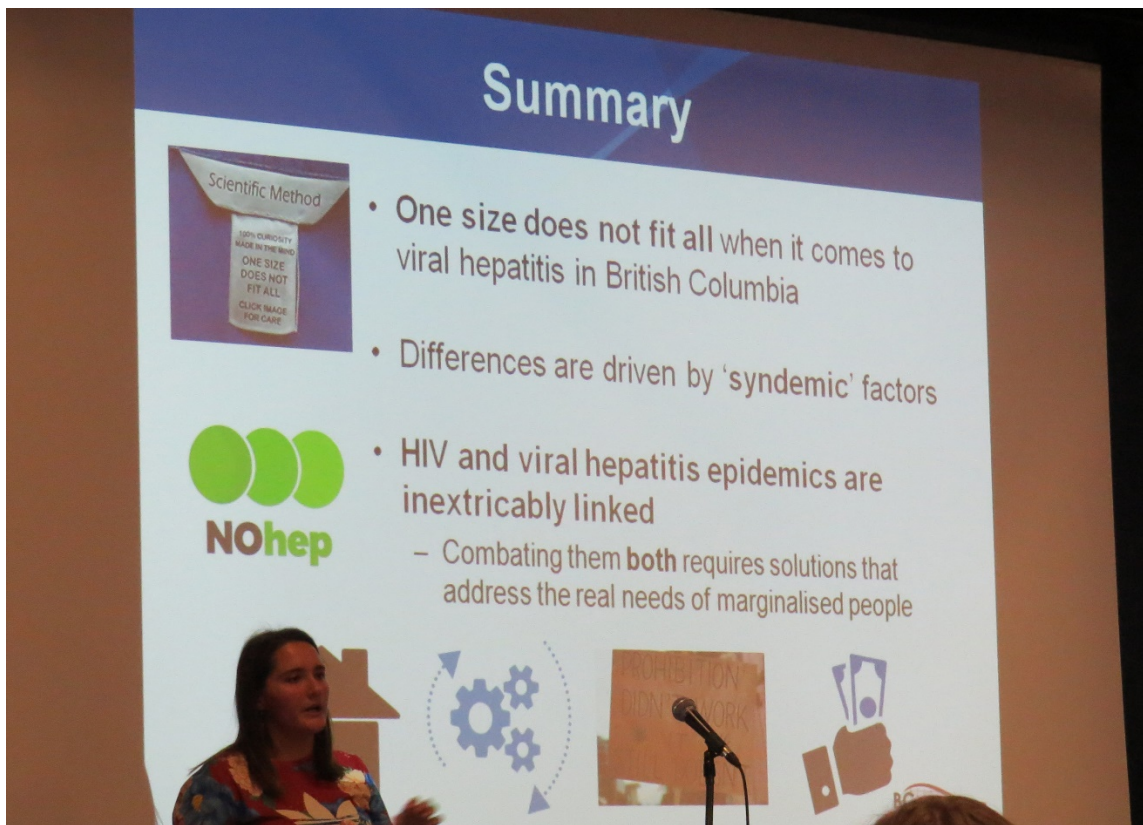
Dr. Sofia Bartlett of the BC Centre for Disease Control, shows how HCV testing, treatment, and care in BC compare among three different populations: those who have recently used injection drugs, those who used them in the past, and those who have never used them. It is interesting that while 94% of persons who have recently used drugs have been tested, only 77% of those who used them in the past have been tested. This is an inequity we should be addressing. We surmise this population is not being targeted because its members are no longer in the group most at risk of transmitting the disease.



Dr. Bartlett shows hepatitis C "core areas" in BC. Note such high-frequency areas in the northern and central interior, eastern interior, Haida Gwaii, downtown eastside, central and northern Vancouver Island, plus the cities of Surrey, Richmond, Prince George, and Kamloops among others.



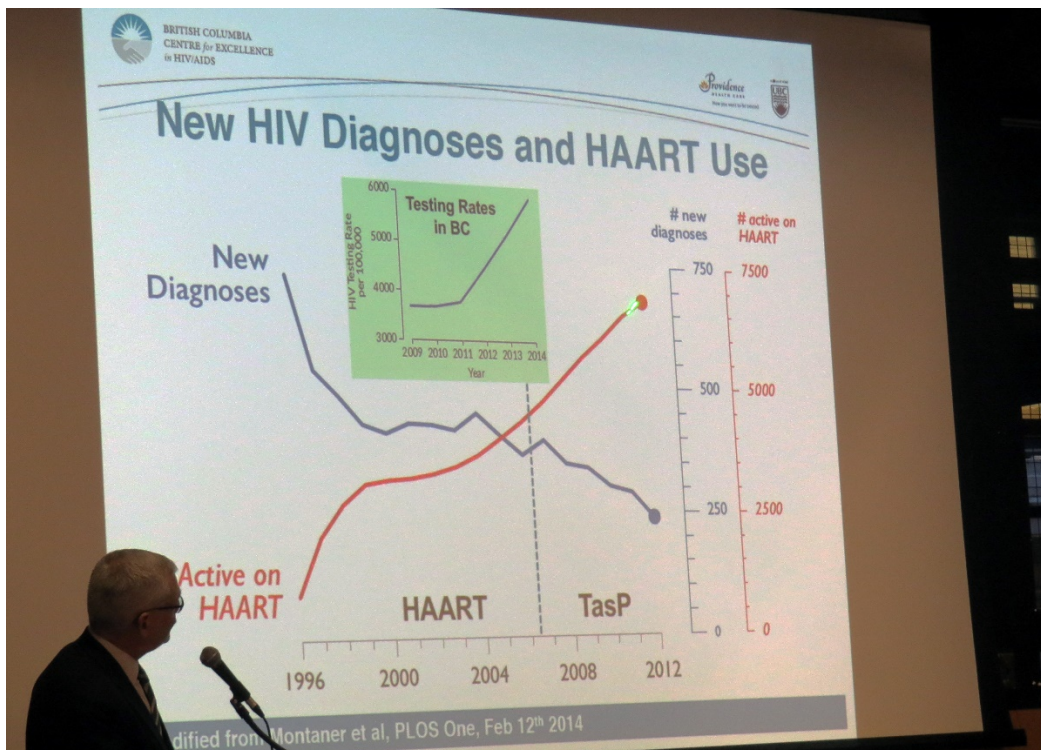
Dr. Bartlett shows how the new DAA hepatitis C drugs are lowering liver-related mortality among HCV+ people in BC to approximately 250 deaths per year. At the same time, the fentanyl epidemic has skyrocketed the poly-substance use death rate (which had been declining fairly steadily between 1997 and 2014) among the HCV+ population to up to about 400 deaths annually. Clearly, lowering both liver- and fentanyl-related deaths are of great concern in our province, and it is ironic that now fentanyl is more likely to cause the death of an HCV+ person in BC than HCV is.



Dr. Bartlett summarizes her presentation by showing how HIV and viral hepatitis epidemics are 'syndemics' or epidemics with inter-related causes, characteristics, sequellae, and solutions which are 'inextricably linked' to one another.



Dr. Julio Montaner of the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS reminded us of the huge difference treatment can make in the life of an HIV+ person, showing us here a photo of a child dying from AIDS, with another photo of an apparently healthy child 7 months after initiation of treatment.



Dr. Montaner shows how the annual rate of incidence of HIV in BC has declined from 750 new diagnoses in 1996 down to 235 in 2012. A likely cause of this could be the increase in people actively taking highly-active antiviral therapy (HAART) which acts as "Treatment as Prevention" – both decreasing the likelihood of HIV becoming AIDS, and the risk of transmission to others.



As he has for the last 25 years, HIV+ volunteer and long-time AIDS activist, John Cameron of the Consumers' Board advocacy group, once again organized this large all-day event. Co-infected with hepatitis B, John does the same thing for World Hepatitis Day, and is hoping some younger person or group of people will volunteer to take over organizing these annual events so he can retire! If you're interested in helping John Cameron out next year, email him at csbdnex@gmail.com.

Other presenting groups included:

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. presenters Gigl Lo and Cathy Zhou introduced their "HIV and Hep C Intervention Program" among BC's Asian immigrant population.

The Dudes' Club's Robin McMill presented a movie about how this men's leadership and support organization is spreading to northern and other parts of our province.

The Infectious Diseases Clinic's Caitlin Olatunbosun presented "Update on HIV Meds."

Patience Magagula of the Afro-Canadian Positive Network of BC (ACPNET BC) located in Surrey presented "Let's Talk" (the first important step to eliminating HIV)

Dentist Dr. Nick Aytoglu presented on the Positive Living Society's new Dental Clinic. Very exciting, very much needed services! This clinic specializes not only in patient dental care for all, but can also help clients find innovative ways of accessing funding for their care.

The SISTERS of PERPETUAL INDULGENCE put on a presentation for us.

Finally, YouthCo presented a movie, "A Mile in Our Mocassins."

Thanks, everyone, for a really well-planned and successful 25th anniversary World AIDS Day Vancouver!