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Community Access National Network Commemorates World AIDS Day

Looking inward in our own spaces

WASHINGTON, DC (December 1, 2023) – In recognition of World AIDS Day and this year's theme, "*Let Community Lead*", Jen Laws (he/him/his), President & CEO of the Community Access National Network, otherwise known as CANN, reflected with the following statement:

"We have an obligation to advocate to powerful audiences but also inward, in our *own* spaces. Be it hiring new advocates, or rewarding talent, or ensuring equitable compensation, or even an inability to implement succession plans, it is time we acknowledge that part of our collective failure to advance in Ending the HIV Epidemic is due to having the same ideas and same voices influencing decisions, programs, and laws for decades. It's time for 'legacy organizations' to find the next generation of leadership – executives *and* board members. That leadership must reflect the face of today's epidemic. The transition must include sharing of the relationships and institutional knowledge. We also need to evaluate 'generational' shifts in HIV advocacy and empower newer voices to participate. Meaningfully, that translates to offering competitive compensation, or employee benefits packages to include coverage for gender affirming care. It means making room for and lending opportunities to folks with less-traditional education or experience. It means identifying *each* role that can be remote and making it that way. It means taking risks on hires and promotions. People living with HIV, we are *not* often 'neatly packaged'. We need folks willing to invest in us, in our already under-resourced communities. If we are to be honest about '*Letting Communities Lead*', that means more than what details are included in government programming or grants. It means ensuring that 'we' in the industry of advocacy are actually and tangibly lead by the communities we so often speak of."

For general information, please contact CANN at info@tiicann.org.

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About the Community Access National Network: *The mission of the Community Access National Network (CANN) is to define, promote, and improve access to healthcare services and supports for people living with HIV/AIDS and/or Viral Hepatitis through advocacy, education, and networking. These services must be affordable to the people who need them regardless of insurance status, income, or geographic location.*

Community Access National Network (CANN)
www.tiicann.org