

# The CBRC update

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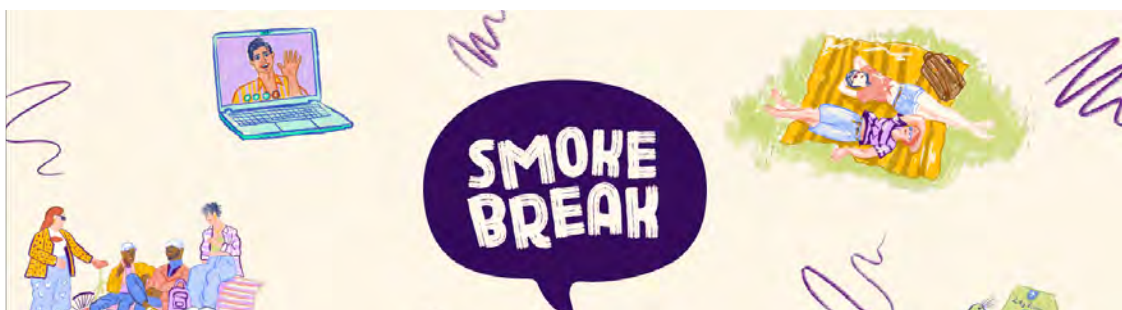
**In this month's newsletter:** Smoke Break, new syphilis resources, spotlight on Andrew Barker, and more!

## THE LATEST

1. CBRC has completed [a suite](#) of syphilis education and awareness resources designed for both community members and health care providers across Alberta. Our community-facing materials are designed for sexual and gender diverse communities and focus on empowering people with clear information and tools for self-advocacy. These include:
  - [Let's Be Clear, Syphilis Is Here](#), a straightforward guide to syphilis;
  - [Congenital Syphilis](#), created specifically for sexual and gender diverse communities; and
  - a [Doxy-PEP Self-Advocacy Guide](#) to support informed conversations and decision-making.

For providers, we developed materials that are concise, evidence-informed, and directly applicable to practice. These include:

- a [practice update](#) on using lidocaine with syphilis treatment injections;
  - a [background report](#) on gbMSM and syphilis in Alberta;
  - a [policy brief](#) focused on addressing syphilis among Alberta gbMSM; and
  - an [online learning module](#) focused on providing culturally-safe syphilis care for gbMSM.
2. Are you a 2S/LGBTQIA+ person in Canada trying to quit or reduce smoking in 2026? Try [Smoke Break](#)! Our latest harm reduction program offers support for 2S/LGBTQIA+ folks who want to change their relationship with smoking or vaping. Sign up today to receive nicotine replacement kits, peer support, tools, and supportive care items.



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## OUR COMMUNITY: Andrew Barker

Andrew Barker (he/him) is the Vice-Chair of CBRC's Board of Directors. Since 1996, he has been involved in various fields of gay men's health and community-based research. He has also provided facilitation and strategic planning support for non-profit organizations.

Andrew grew up on the North Shore of Vancouver and completed his undergraduate studies in Business Administration at the University of British Columbia in the early '90s, where he came out between his third and fourth year. "That was toward the end of a big wave of the AIDS epidemic. I knew—as a young, gay man—that I was at risk," Andrew says. "And I knew that there was a good chance that I was going to lose people." This was the motivation for him to volunteer at [YouthCO](#), founded in 1994 by youth leaders within the HIV and Hep C movements in B.C.

Early into the organization's founding, Andrew then connected with CBRC's founders Rick Marchand and Terry Trussler. He worked on several community-based research projects in the early 2000s, including the Gay Men's Action Plan (GMAP) for the Man to Man Program at AIDS Vancouver (now [Ribbon Community](#)), looking at risk factors and social determinants of health for gay, bisexual, and men who have sex with men across Canada.

He was also involved in launching flagship CBRC initiatives, such as the [Sex Now Survey](#) and [Summit](#). During recruitment for the very first Sex Now survey in June 2002, Andrew recalls that the team came equipped to Vancouver Pride with about a hundred or so clipboards. "We could not keep going fast enough! There was a thirst for it. At the same time, we had a lot of women coming up to us asking, 'Can I do this? Where's our survey?'" he says. "Those were the early inklings that we were onto something here." The need for health research by and for people of diverse sexualities and genders was taking shape.

Looking back at the first edition of Summit, "there were maybe 100, 150 attendees, which we thought was a huge success," Andrew says. Reflecting on the growth of the conference, he says that Summit is "now getting to a place where we are more representative" of diverse 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities. "In the early days, we weren't as connected to academic institutions as we are today. We've moved in a direction where we are being recognized as a thought leader in queer and trans health."

More than two decades after helping set some of the groundwork for 2S/LGBTQIA+ health research in Canada, Andrew is settling into a different pace of life. He currently runs an interior and landscape design studio where he works with a mix of non-profit, residential, and commercial clients. In his spare time, he enjoys being outside, canoeing, going to the beach, and working on his garden.



Photo: Andrew Barker

**“A lot of CBRC’s early work was advocacy. When I started in the late ‘90s and early 2000s, a large portion of new HIV infections were still gay men. There was no research funding or support for gay men. Things have shifted since, but that’s what first engaged me—the idea of research being by and for gay men.”**

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## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

- **Photos from Summit 2025 are now available**—[Click here](#) to access and share photos from all three days of the conference, including plenary panels, breakout sessions, and poster presentations. A special thanks to Steve Gerrard Photography for capturing these moments.
- Reflecting on **CBRC's big accomplishments this past year**, we shared some of our [highlights from 2025](#).
- Katie O'Brien (they/them), a research coordinator at CBRC, recently defended their Master's thesis, which takes the form of [a podcast](#) (congratulations, Katie!). **TRANS FATS** chews on the question: how is their experience of transgender corporeality mediated by pathologising logics?

### CBRC in the Media:

- Algonquin College published [an article](#) highlighting research by Summit presenters from the college's Human-Centred Design Lab on challenges faced by 2SLGBTQI+ international students in Ottawa.

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## COMING UP

**February is Black History Month!** Stay tuned as we will highlight research being done by and for Black 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities across Canada in the coming weeks.

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## GET INVOLVED

CBRC, Ribbon Community, and Dignity Seniors Society are pleased to introduce the **Queer, Wise, and Inquisitive Collective (QWIC)**. This program is for **2S/LGBTQIA+ people age 55+ to learn community-based research skills**. We are looking for 20 2S/LGBTQIA+ people to meet weekly on Tuesday nights, starting in January. Find full details [here](#), and sign up [here](#).

**CBRC is a partner on SHAPE+, a community-led project focused on centering the voices of 2S/LGBTQIA+ people in Canada living with chronic pain.** [Share your experiences](#) through a short, anonymous survey to help guide the co-development of research questions that truly reflect what matters most to 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities living with chronic pain.



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