Press Release

**Provincewide Resource Launched for GBT2Q Community**

***A New Comprehensive Guide for Navigating a Queer World***

VANCOUVER, BC – WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23rd, 2021 - Health Initiative for MEN (HIM) today announced the launch of More Than Sex, a new provincewide resource that aims to improve the sexual health and wellbeing for communities of gay, bi and queer men, as well as two-spirit and gender diverse people (GBT2Q) in British Columbia. HIM invites members of the GBT2Q community and anyone who wants to learn about the queer health experience to visit checkhimout.ca/more-than-sex. @HIMtweets, @HealthInitiativeforMen, @instahim.

More Than Sex is a guide about queer sex, diverse bodies, health and GBT2Q cultures and communities. It shares information to help navigate a queer world, explores sexual health and starts conversations about some of the forces and experiences that shape the lives of queer people. The new online resource will also connect people to organizations across B.C. that can offer specialized health and wellness services unique to the needs of GBT2Q members.

**Sections of More Than Sex:** Navigating a Queer World, Sexual Activities, Sexual Health Strategies, Mental and Social Health, HIV and STIs 101, Local Resources and a Glossary.

More Than Sex prioritizes language and content that is more inclusive and speaks to the experiences of community members who are too often excluded from sexual health resources aimed at cis gay men. More than any other resource HIM has released in the past, More Than Sex speaks to the diversity of experiences and needs of community members. The resource will maintain an updated glossary to help unpack some of the more specific language used within the resource and broader community.

“Health Initiative for Men is committed to strengthening diversity and inclusion within its own organization and across the province of British Columbia,” Greg Oudman, Executive Director of Health Initiative for Men said. “In 2018, after extensive consultation with the communities we engage with, we adopted an ambitious five-year plan that is guiding all of our work. More Than Sex is a fundamental platform in this vital work, because its development relies heavily on the lived experiences of trans, non-binary and Two-Spirit communities. More Than Sex successfully helps us to understand many aspects of the queer world we live in, through the lens of gender diverse queer people. This perspective has been largely missing in our work, and is part of our responsibility to ensure that the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice play a central role in how we reflect ourselves and serve these communities.”

More Than Sex is rooted in the guidance, leadership, and hard work of a Steering and Leadership Committee. This committee is made up of community leaders who are trans men, non-binary, and/or Two-Spirit. From the specific language to the style of the graphics and the original characters featured, this new initiative was shaped by these community leaders who shared their time, energy, and experience to help guide the development of More Than Sex.

Commenting on the launch, Program Manager of Health Promotion, Simon Rayek said: “It was really from the expertise and leadership of our trans, non-binary, and Two-Spirit communities that we arrived at the understanding that something that has been wanted- and has been missing- is a resource that speaks to community members on as many ends of the gender spectrum, regardless of body or identity as possible. More Than Sex helps us broaden the umbrella under which we speak about queer sex, health and our communities.”

Health Initiative for Men (HIM) is a peer-based organization that serves the unique sexual, mental, social, and physical health needs of GBT2Q in Vancouver’s Lower Mainland and across British Columbia. HIM operates five health centres offering sexual health testing (including vaccination, treatment and prevention options), as well as professional counselling, sexual health education, and support groups. HIM is dedicated to strengthening the health and wellness of GBT2Q through trusted, tailored, targeted health promotion.

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