

EACS Newsletter - World AIDS Day 2021 Message from the President and President-elect

1 December 2021

Dear EACS Members

It has been forty years since the first cases of AIDS were described in the USA. We lost many good people, but we have come a long way since then; efficient testing and prevention, effective, well-tolerated, easy-to-use and widely available anti-retroviral therapy and prevention. However, things have not been as straightforward. The last two years have been dominated by another pandemic; COVID-19. Many of us have lost friends, family, loved-ones and colleagues to yet another dreadful viral infection. Not only has this set us back from achieving our targets for ending AIDS as a major threat but has also highlighted many of the inequalities that exist in health and social care globally, regionally and nationally.

Now, more than ever is the time to tackle inequalities and get the global response to both these pandemics on track. It is time to apply lessons learned.

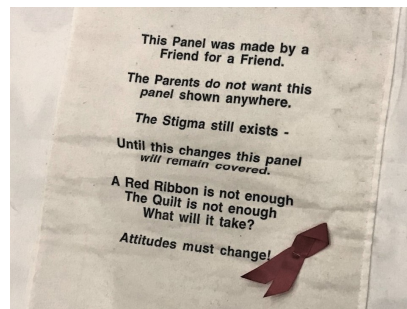
As the recent UNAIDS 2021 report; “Confronting Inequalities: Lessons for pandemic responses from 40 years of AIDS” shows that, in 2020, we had 680 000 AIDS-related deaths and 1.5 million new infections. There were 37.7 million people living with HIV, of who 10.2 million were not on treatment. There are inequalities at many levels; testing and prevention services, ART provision, harm-reduction services, criminalisation and the failure to address the needs of key populations. Moreover, lack of joined-up physical and wholistic psycho-social care for people living with HIV and stigma are widespread.

Despite the hardships of COVID-19, our mission at EACS remains steadfast. We will continue to work with our members, clinical and academic organisations, community organisations, governments, NGOs and the pharmaceutical industry to advance knowledge, promote and develop good practice, value advances in scientific technologies and above all, dispel stigma and challenge inequalities.

**UK AIDS Memorial Quilt at the
18th European AIDS Conference**



Anonymous quilt with message



The UK AIDS Memorial Quilt which was displayed at the recent European AIDS Conference in London, reminds us of the need to always remember and cherish

the ones that we have lost and remember the lessons for our future.

As 2021 draws to a close, and we commemorate World AIDS Day, let's cross boundaries and work together to end inequalities.

We need each other. No one forgotten, none left behind. This concerns us all.

Please remain active members of our EACS Society and stay safe.

Sanjay Bhagani, President, EACS

Esteban Martinez, President-elect, EACS

**"The Stigma still exists -
A Red Ribbon is not enough
The Quilt is not enough
What will it take?
Attitudes must change!"**

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