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**OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE RAINBOW HEALTH NETWORK
REGARDING THE PROPOSAL TO DEFUND PRIDE IN TORONTO**

The Steering Committee of the Rainbow Health Network appeals to the City of Toronto to continue to support and fund the annual Pride festival and parade. We believe that the City of Toronto Mayor and Councillors should recognise and respect the invaluable contributions the LGBTTT2Q communities make to the City's vibrant social, cultural and economic life. These communities need to be able to determine how to manage our annual Pride event, including taking decisions regarding participation.

Over one million people attend the Toronto Pride festival and parade. It celebrates our city's strong commitment to equity, social justice and diversity. Toronto's ethno-cultural diversity makes Toronto's Pride unique, in acknowledging the struggles against homophobia and transphobia faced by the local LGBTTT2Q communities, and by those in the wider world fighting against oppression. Toronto's Pride has made this statement strongly over the years.

The Pride festival and parade must be determined by key values that recognise the importance of equity, social justice, and the celebration of diversity. Last year, Pride Toronto held extensive public consultations to determine who and how different organisations and groups could participate in the Pride parade. This was as a result of public action, including protests, regarding the participation of the 'Queers Against Israeli Apartheid' (QuAIA) in the Pride parade. The QuAIA marched in the Pride parade, duly adhering to the City of Toronto's anti-discriminatory policy guidelines.

We strongly urge the Mayor and City Councillors to recognise the importance of supporting Pride and heed the Toronto City Manager who reiterated that QuAIA does not violate the City's anti-discriminatory policy. We earnestly request that the Mayor and City Councillors continue to fund the Pride festival and parade, and respect the input and values of the LGBTTT2Q communities, given the immense contribution and positive impact Pride has on the City of Toronto.

In Solidarity,

The Steering Committee of the Rainbow Health Network