

# Comic tackles sexual health

*Kiss Me Deadly aimed at young readers*

by Adrian Lysenko

Northern News Services

A NEW COMIC BOOK published by the NWT Department of Health and Social Services is hoping to present youth with information about sexual health.

The comic, *Kiss Me Deadly*, is written by Fort Smith's Richard Van Camp and illustrated by Haida artist Christopher Auchter.

"Some people will not pick up a pamphlet, they will not pick up a brochure, but the comic book is very lively. It's very appealing," said Wanda White, communicable disease specialist with the department.

"We think this will reach the youth in a format and language that will be familiar to them and will guide them to making better choices."

One reason the department wanted to create the comic is the rate of sexually transmitted infections in the Northwest Territories is 12 times higher than the national average.

"The only way to make a difference is to provide tools to youth to make better decisions," said White.

"This comic book was designed out of the need to educate sexually active youth and those considering becoming sexually active

about the importance of protecting themselves against sexual transmitted infection.

"Also this comic role models behaviour related to healthy relationships and problem solving."

The storyline and content was focus-tested in communities in the territory primarily with youth. Once that was completed, the story line was written and illustrated and then focus-tested again.

"The language is candid," she said.

With the frank dialogue in the story of how youth view sex, White said she hopes it will start conversations between youth or family members about the subject.

The comic was made in partnership with the Healthy Aboriginal Network who have created other comics dealing subjects such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and suicide prevention.

The comic book will be distributed to all health centres in the NWT, youth centres, through the public health office, and used in schools in conjunction with the new sexual health lesson plan that will be initiated in September.

It will also be available through the department's Respect Yourself website.

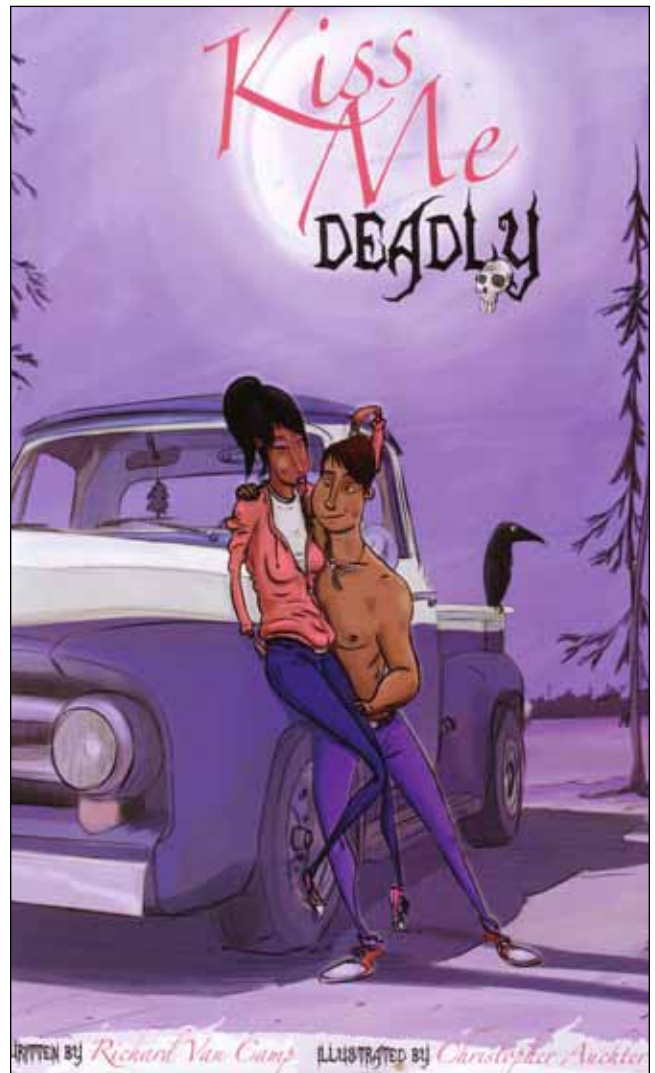


Illustration by Christopher Auchter

*Kiss Me Deadly*, written by Richard Van Camp and illustrated by Christopher Auchter, is a comic book dealing with youth sexual health that has been released by NWT Department of Health and Social Services.