

ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS CANADA TEAM UP TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF CANADIANS

\$15.5 million invested in chronic disease prevention by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, with support from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Heart and Stroke Foundation

OTTAWA – February 3, 2010 – More than 30 organizations from across Canada are uniting as partners in a series of initiatives designed to improve the health of Canadians by preventing chronic disease. A total of \$15.5 million is being invested in seven collaborative coalitions addressing such issues as childhood obesity, screening for chronic disease by family doctors, and the unique needs of First Nations communities. The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health, announced the funding today to mark World Cancer Day, February 4th, and Heart Month. Joining her for the announcement was the lead coalition funder Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, along with funders Public Health Agency of Canada and the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

“About two-thirds of deaths in Canada are due to chronic diseases. Many of these diseases, such as heart disease and many cancers, can be prevented through healthier lifestyles and healthier communities,” said the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, federal Minister of Health. “Bringing together the many dedicated organizations working to prevent chronic disease will help to accelerate a vision we all share: healthier children and healthier Canadians in all parts of the country.”

An initiative of the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, and funded under the banner of CLASP – which stands for Coalitions Linking Action and Science for Prevention – the initiatives respond to the fact that many aspects of healthy living – such as maintaining a healthy body weight, quitting smoking and improving the quality of our environment – can reduce the risk for not only many cancers but also other chronic diseases like diabetes, lung disease and heart disease. Coalitions will incorporate scientific, practice and policy expertise, as well as evidence from both research studies and existing programs in their planning, and will build on chronic disease prevention efforts already underway in many provinces and territories.

“CLASP is the first of its kind to support organizations working together in this way to prevent chronic disease,” said Dr. Simon Sutcliffe, Chair of the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. “The results will benefit Canadians in a range of ways – from tackling childhood obesity to understanding the relationship between our health and the way we have organized our physical living and working environments. This team effort – drawing from and sharing expertise from across the country – truly demonstrates that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”

The funded programs include those that will:

- Tackle childhood obesity by limiting the accessibility and appeal of unhealthy food choices, while also partnering with remote First Nations communities to assist in developing sustainable food strategies based on local dietary practices.
- Work with First Nations communities in two provinces to develop a culturally appropriate chronic disease prevention training program for community-based health workers to increase the delivery of chronic disease and cancer prevention.
- Harness electronic medical record systems and evidence-based approaches to increase prevention and screening for heart disease, diabetes and cancer in participating family doctors’ offices.

A complete list of funded programs is available at partnershipagainstcancer.ca.

“These initiatives have the overall wellness of Canadians at their heart,” said Sally Brown, CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation, which, in addition to co-funding two programs, is also a member of a separate coalition receiving funding. “We are proud to be part of a new and integrated approach that recognizes and celebrates that we can achieve more for chronic diseases that affect millions of Canadians, by working together.”

The funding is the result of an open call for proposals, issued in June 2009 by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, which invited organizations from across Canada to create partnerships and build on coalitions that included representation from two or more provinces or territories, addressed the prevention of cancer as well as other chronic diseases, and added value to existing work by research, practice and policy specialists. An adjudication panel of objective research, practice and policy experts from across North America evaluated the proposals against a transparent list of review criteria. Of the \$15.5 million being invested in CLASP, the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer is funding \$12.5 million.

The CLASP concept was developed by lead funder Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, working with the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society to engage several hundred Canadian research, practice and policy experts in pan-Canadian consultation meetings.

About the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer

The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer is an independent organization funded by the federal government to accelerate action on cancer control for all Canadians. We bring together cancer survivors, patients and families, cancer experts and government representatives to implement the first pan-Canadian cancer control strategy. Our vision is to be a driving force to achieve a focused approach that will help prevent cancer, enhance the quality of life of those affected by cancer, lessen the likelihood of dying from cancer and increase the efficiency of cancer control in Canada. For more information about the Partnership and Canada’s cancer control strategy, visit partnershipagainstcancer.ca. The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer is also the driving force behind cancerview.ca, an online community linking Canadians to cancer information, services and resources.

About the Public Health Agency of Canada

The Public Health Agency of Canada is a Government of Canada agency with the primary goal of strengthening Canada’s capacity to protect and improve the health of Canadians and helping reduce pressures on the health-care system. For more information, visit www.phac-aspc.gc.ca.

About the Heart and Stroke Foundation

The Heart and Stroke Foundation, a volunteer-based health charity, leads in eliminating heart disease and stroke and reducing their impact through the advancement of research and its application, the promotion of healthy living and advocacy.

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