



BC Healthy Living Alliance

working together to promote wellness and prevent chronic disease

BC'S TOP HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS UNITE FOR \$22-MILLION INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND TOBACCO REDUCTION

VANCOUVER, BC (August 14, 2007) – Nine BC health organizations who routinely work to improve the health of British Columbians and improve public awareness of specific health issues, today announced they're joining forces on a \$22-million initiative to promote healthy eating, physical activity and a reduction in tobacco use. The initiative is expected to reach nearly one million British Columbians and has been sponsored by the provincial government's ActNow! BC program.

Established in 2003 and collectively known as the BC Healthy Living Alliance (BCHLA), the group represents the largest health promotion team in BC history. They include the BC Lung Association, BC Pediatric Society, BC Recreation and Parks Association, Canadian Diabetes Association (Pacific Area), Canadian Cancer Society (BC and Yukon Division), Dietitians of Canada (BC Region), Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon, Public Health Association of BC and the Union of BC Municipalities.

The BCHLA's **Healthy Eating Programs** will target 650,000 students, 560,000 community centre users and more than 20,000 families. The goals of the program will include increasing the availability of healthy food and drinks in public places, reducing the amount of sugary drinks consumed by children and developing ways to deliver more fruit and vegetables to low income families, along with skills to cook them.

"Making BC the healthiest jurisdiction ever to host an Olympic Games is just the beginning," said Gordon Hogg, Minister of State for ActNow BC. "Through our partnership with the BCHLA, we want to give British Columbians the information and the skills they need to stay active and healthy their entire life."

The BCHLA's **Physical Activity Programs** will promote and support increased physical fitness to 130,000 inactive adults and their families through increased access to recreation centres for low income families, planning grants for walking and cycling trails, public awareness campaigns and signage, and walking groups.

The BCHLA's **Tobacco-Reduction Programs** are expected to reach 50 per cent of all BC young adults including 19-29 year olds in the workplace, at post-secondary institutions, rental housing, restaurants, bars, cafes, sports venues and youth oriented shops. The programs will involve 60,000 potential smokers, 80-100 companies and 4500 housing providers.

"Each of our member organizations is dedicated to improving the health of British Columbians," said Suzanne Allard Strutt, Chair, BCHLA. "Thanks to the support of ActNow BC, our Healthy Living Programs will provide British Columbians with the information and support they need to eat well, be active and live smoke free. In addition, we're investing in an external evaluation of the programs through the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Care Research so we can report back to the public and research community on their outcomes." For more information on the BC Healthy Living Alliance visit www.bchealthyliving.ca.

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