



CANADA'S

# Physical Activity Guide

to Healthy Active Living

ISSUE 4, THE MILLENNIUM ISSUE

## Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

First came *Canada's Physical Activity Guide*, then *Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Older Adults*. Coming soon...the *Business Case for Active Living at Work!*

Turn to page eleven for an update on how this upcoming online tool will help you make the case for supportive active living workplace environments that can improve the health and morale of employees and boost the bottom line at the same time.

Active living policies and programs represent an effective, cost-efficient and caring way to answer employees' call for help in coping with the challenges of managing work-related stress, and balancing both personal and professional responsibilities.



Please circulate this newsletter.

## Launch of Older Adult Guide Gets Senior's Toes Tapping

If your vision of your golden years brings to mind images of warm slippers and a rocking chair, think again! A version of *Canada's Physical Activity Guide* aimed at adults over 55 was launched in the spring to the fanfare of a high-stepping group of tap dancers whose average age was 70.



The Oakville Happy Tappers cut a rug at the launch of the Older Adult Guide in Toronto last May.

Proving that the best prescription for better health and independent living is regular physical activity throughout all stages of life, the Oakville Happy Tappers stole the show at the national launch of *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living for Older Adults*, held at a Toronto-area YMCA on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

Other seniors on hand to demonstrate for the media the variety of physical activities available to older Canadians included a mesmerizing T'ai Chi class, members of the Canadian National Seniors Games team, and an enthusiastic group of Inuit Elders from Gjoa Haven — 150 kilometres above the Arctic Circle — who beat on native drums while chanting to the rhythm.

"While we seniors may feel we are in good health, the truth is that two-thirds of us are losing strength, flexibility, and endurance,

*"This is a good moment for Canada's most mature and seasoned citizens. The development of an activity guide for older adults – the product of careful and focused effort by the scientific community, seniors groups, and the Government of Canada – is reportedly the first of its kind in the world."*

— Dr. Andrew Pipe, College of Family Physicians of Canada

the older we get and the less we do," explained Flora Dell, Seniors Advisory member and Vice-Chair to the Active Living Coalition for Older Adults (ALCOA). "Seniors, sitting is hazardous to your health!" she warned.

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

Also speaking to the TV camera crews and news photographers on hand were representatives from Health Canada and its two partners responsible for developing the *Guide* — the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) and the Active Living Coalition for Older Adults (ALCOA).

“A sedentary lifestyle is responsible for up to half the decline in older people’s ability to perform everyday tasks, such as carrying groceries,” said Dr. Ira Jacobs, head of CSEP. “If used as directed, this new *Guide* — specifically designed for older adults — is as close as we come to having an anti-aging medication.”

Other impassioned statements emphasizing the beneficial effects of daily activity and its ability to decelerate the aging process came from representatives of the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging and the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

“Daily, my colleagues see the consequences of a nation that has become very good at doing nothing,” explained Dr. Andrew Pipe of the College. “As it stands today, every age group in this country is at serious risk for eventual heart disease, adult-onset diabetes, cancer of the colon, osteoporosis, and depression because they are not making physical activity a priority in their lives,” he said.

The *Physical Activity Guide for Older Adults* comes on the heels of research showing that physical inactivity is the most prevalent risk factor for premature death and disability for Canadians of all ages. In fact, only 34 per cent of men and 29 per cent of women over the age of 55 engage in 15 minutes or more of physical activity each day.

“The movement towards an active living approach is extremely significant for older Canadians,” said Health Minister Allan Rock. “The development of *Canada’s Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living for Older Adults* is an important component of the federal government’s commitment to ensuring that Canadians have the necessary tools to improve and maintain their health.”

The launch event succeeded in putting the new *Guide* in the spotlight, with stories generated by national and local radio, TV, and newspapers across the country.

## Survey of Callers Ordering *Guides* Reports Encouraging Results

Results of a survey to evaluate the reactions of persons ordering *Canada’s Physical Activity Guide* through the toll-free number are very positive, with nine out of ten Canadians finding the toll-free service either “very helpful” or “somewhat helpful”.

The Health Canada survey was conducted in collaboration with the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, Everest Groupe, and Canada Communications Group. It asked a random sample of 500 Canadians who ordered the *Guide* about the effectiveness of the distribution process, ease of comprehension, and short-term impact on physical activity knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours.

Here are further highlights of the results:

- Most individuals said they **heard about the *Guide*** from a magazine (21%), while 20.2% learned about it from the television, 14.5% from newspapers, followed by 7.9% from their doctor and 6.5% from the Internet.
- **Delivery times** were within two weeks of ordering for 73.4% of individuals.
- Six out of ten individuals who ordered the *Guide* had **read it**.
- Almost all respondents (98.6%) indicated that the *Guide* is **easy to understand**.
- When respondents were asked to identify (unprompted) **the most important messages** from the *Guide*, the most frequent response was “Need to be active to stay healthy” (42.2%), followed by “Activity suggestions” (18.5%), “Importance of regular physical activity” (14.9%), and “All physical activity, even moderate, is good” (14.2%).
- Three-quarters of individuals say they **learned something of value** from the *Guide* over and above what they already knew about various aspects of physical activity and health.
- More than 75% stated that they had **increased their activity level** since ordering the *Guide*.
- Approximately 84% said they **found the *Guide* to be somewhat or very helpful**.
- Nine out of ten respondents said they **kept the *Guide***, while 46.6% had already **recommended the *Guide* to others**.

Close to five million copies of *Canada’s Physical Activity Guide* were distributed through the toll-free service during the first 12 months of availability since the *Guide* was launched in October 1998. For more information contact <randy\_adams@hc-sc.gc.ca>.



# Guide Developers' Activities

For its part, **Health Canada** included the *Guide* and *Handbook* into the registration kits of 1,500 delegates from 66 countries at the recent Global Conference on Aging held in Montreal.

In addition, the Department included materials about the *Guide* at three other key events: the Manitoba Summit on Healthy Active Living; ALCOA's National Blueprint for Action on Active Living Summit; and the World Global Walk, where an exhibit on the older adult version of the *Guide* was also featured.

Last spring, Health Canada's Deputy Minister David Dodge focused on the *Guide for Older Adults* when he spoke on physical activity and health in Victoria at the Annual Scientific Assembly of the College of Family Physicians of Canada. "Not only does physical inactivity contribute to chronic diseases and disability – reducing the quality of life and functional capacity of people in their later years – it also places a heavy burden on our public health care system," Mr. Dodge said.

"A comprehensive study published in 1998 concluded that 'inactive' people cost \$300 per person, per year, more in health care than 'active' citizens. Extrapolate those numbers a few years down the road — with our aging population — and you can begin to appreciate what's at stake."

In terms of *Guide* promotional materials, Health Canada has produced a number of displays focusing on the new *Guide for Older Adults*, which will be available on temporary loan for conferences, workshops, etc. from the following offices:

## Health Canada Regional Offices

Atlantic Region: (902) 426-2038  
 Ontario Region: (416) 973-4389  
 Manitoba/Saskatchewan Region: (204) 983-2508

## Provincial/Territorial Offices

Nova Scotia: (902) 424-7658  
 Prince Edward Island: (902) 368-6449  
 New Brunswick: (506) 453-3193  
 Newfoundland: (709) 729-5281  
 Quebec: (418) 646-6647  
 Manitoba: (204) 945-4405  
 Saskatchewan: (306) 933-5743  
 Alberta/NWT: (780) 427-6949  
 Yukon: (867) 667-3778

NWT: (867) 873-7245  
 British Columbia: (250) 356-0402

## National Office

Health Canada National Office: (613) 941-0377  
 Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology: (613) 234-3755

To date, over 6 million principal *Guides* and more than 1 million copies of the *Older Adults Guide* have been distributed nationwide. Meanwhile, the *Guide* web site at <www.paguide.com> has received more than 150,000 hits since its inception.

In October, the **Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology** (CSEP) released a new poster entitled the "Health and Fitness Benefits of Physical Activity", with financial assistance from Health Canada's Fitness and Active Living Unit. For use in the classroom, lab, examining room, gym or recreation centre, this colorful poster features illustrations that demonstrate the time and effort needed to achieve both health and fitness benefits.

Excellent as a counselling tool, the poster incorporates cutting-edge information from the *Guide* in concert with traditional Target Heart Rate training charts. For more information about obtaining copies of the poster, call toll-free 1-877-651-3755 or visit the CSEP web site at <www.csep.ca>.

CSEP is still coordinating distribution of the *Guide* promotional materials, with several new items added to the product line. The line now features *Guide* fanny packs, pins, and shoelaces in addition to the existing line of T-shirts, mouse pads, fridge magnets, mugs, and presenters' tools. These fun and colorful products can assist your promotional activities to get Canadians active, their way, every day – for life! To order any of these items, contact CSEP at the number mentioned above.

Some of the many initiatives the **Active Living Coalition for Older Adults** undertook for promoting the *Guide* included: co-writing an article published in the *Canadian Family Physician Journal*; distributing a "tip sheet" on how to raise awareness of the *Guide* to ALCOA's national and provincial members; as well as handing out *Guide* materials at four conferences relating to aging and to the International Year of the Older Person Enabling Committee, which represents over 30 seniors' organizations.



(continued from page 3)

healthy active living for its participants, who include fitness leaders and other health care professionals such as physiotherapists, chiropractors, and psychologists.

The program provided ALCAP with an opportunity to highlight the importance of influencers in the health and fitness communities – those people who can help other Canadians take their first steps or encourage those who are newly active to keep it up. The program also distributed about 1,200 *Guides* with a ballot insert so readers could answer questions about who helps them get active and where they got information about active living. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was provided to make sending the ballots back for prizes easy. As of mid-fall, the return rate is a very respectable 10 per cent.

Another ALCAP facilitator in London reports that she and a physical activity promoter from the Middlesex London Health Unit held a community meeting inviting people to get fit in '99, using the *Physical Activity Guide*. Another informal workshop using the *Guide* materials was targeted to the inactive. Over 60 people attended the workshop to hear about the various aspects of fitness, watch the *Guide* video, and discuss ways to overcome barriers to being active on a regular basis. Reasonable individual activity goals were set by the participants, who were sent a follow-up card with a reminder of their goals on it six weeks later to help keep them on track.

The ALCAP facilitator knew it had been a big success when recently her server at Starbucks recognized her from the workshop and said it had “changed her life” – now she’s involved in a daily walking program and feels better than ever!

The **Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute** (CFLRI) mailed copies of the *Guide* to subscribers to its *Research File* service. *Research File* is CFLRI’s popular series of one-page research summaries based on state-of-the-art findings reported in the scientific literature. The Institute condenses scientific articles into short, easy-to-read summaries that give professionals and policy-makers the most current information on new research findings about physical activity and health.

The **Canadian MedicAlert Foundation** uses the *Guide* and its related materials as part of its staff development program to increase awareness of the unique needs of older adults.

The **YMCA of Canada** has been busy using the *Guide* in all of its national service training programs, which include discussions on barriers to becoming active and tips to help get moving. *Guide* information is also now part of the Y’s Fitness and Aquatic Leadership manuals, and hard copies have been distributed to YMCAs and YWCAs across the country. The Y also reports that the *Guide* is being used as training material for Northern Municipal Officers in Prince George and it was used for training and active living breaks at the Annual Conference of the Institute of Public Administrators in Fredericton, New Brunswick in September.

The **Industrial Accident Prevention Association** (IAPA) distributed the original *Guide* to 40,000 of its member firms, who are medium and large manufacturing companies in Ontario. The *Guide* and the *Guide for Older Adults* were also sent out with IAPA’s newsletter *Accent on Health* to the organization’s 1,000 volunteers.

The **Arthritis Society of Canada** is using the *Guide* as part of their Arthritis Self Management Program, a six-week course led by volunteers who help people learn to manage their arthritis.

The **Canadian Nurses Association** (CNA) has begun working on a Physical Activity and Health Project, in partnership with Health Canada. An important element of the project will be dedicating National Nursing Week in May 2000 to the theme of “Challenge Yourself – Get Active”. The project will endeavor to encourage and support nurses to get active themselves, and to help nurses help their patient population to get active to improve their health. The *Guide* will be used as a fundamental tool in all aspects of the initiative.

**One Voice – The Canadian Seniors Network** has been providing a vital information link among leaders in the field of aging across Canada by distributing the *Guide* and related materials to seniors organizations at the local, provincial and national levels in all provinces and territories. A new One Voice web site <[www.onevoice.ca](http://www.onevoice.ca)> was also launched on October 1<sup>st</sup> in recognition of International Day of Older Persons, and plans are in the works to link the site to those of other health-related organizations, such as the *Guide* site.

## P/T Reps Activities Update

Here's the latest installment updating what some provincial and territorial representatives are doing to promote and distribute the *Guide* and its companion products:

**New Brunswick's** Roger Duval reports that his department of municipalities has been handing out *Guide* materials at health fairs and kiosks, to individuals requesting counseling sessions on building an active lifestyle, and as a "leave-behind" following a keynote address or workshop.

Roger even uses the *Guide* as part of an ice breaker game he calls "Last Person Standing", where everyone is asked to stand and answer yes or no to personal lifestyle questions developed using the *Guide*. If you answer no, you must sit down until the person with the most active lifestyle is still standing. (For example, "Do you usually carry your groceries to the car rather than use the parcel-pick-up service?" and "The last time you had to go to the corner store did you choose to walk, run or wheel, rather than take the car?") The game provides interaction at meetings, conferences or workshops and serves as a unique lifestyle awareness activity.

Michael Arthur of **Nova Scotia's** Sport and Recreation Unit reports that in addition to a couple of radio interviews he gave about active living, the *Guide* was distributed to all provincial high schools through the Dept. of Education, to regional and community health units by the Dept. of Health, and to sport and recreation groups by his Unit. The Unit also gave a grant to FACA-NS (the provincial equivalent of CSEP) to promote the *Guide*.

Jim Evanchuk of **Manitoba** is pleased to announce that 210,000 copies of the *Guide* were distributed across the province as an insert in the Winnipeg Free Press. Also 90,000 *Guides* were inserted with the SummerActive *Guide* distribution.

Art Lord from **Saskatchewan's** Sport and Recreation Unit has sent out copies of the *Guide, Handbook* and poster to a wide variety of public health, nutrition and recreation organizations, as well as to the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

In **Alberta**, Alfred Nikolai says that his department has distributed thousands of copies of the *Guide* through the Alberta Center for Well-Being and the province's eight regional "Fit for Life" centers.

In the **Northwest Territories**, Gary Shauerte and his team put together over 200 packages of *Guide* materials for every local government, all community health centres, and other health practitioners who work with seniors. The package included a covering letter jointly signed by the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs and the Minister of Health and Social Services, urging recipients to use the materials to enhance existing initiatives or develop new programs for elderly residents. Chris Szabo, Manager of Sport and Recreation Programs, also participated in a lively CBC interview about helping older adults take their first steps to becoming active again that was broadcast across the NWT.

The **Yukon's** Karen Thomson reports that three human interest stories about the territory's new Active Living Strategy and the link between physical activity and health benefits have appeared in local papers from around the territory. One of the stories focused on a 52-year old Yukon man who is determined to bike the Alaskan highway and logs an average of 200 kilometres a day in his quest. Another explained how small, isolated communities can be active "the traditional way" by picking cranberries, hunting caribou, fishing, chopping wood, and carrying ice into the home during the winter months for drinking water.

# Physical Activity Guide for Children and Youth Under Development

A third version of *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living* is being developed with the health needs of our nation's children and youth in mind.



Children & Youth Guide development co-chairs Dr. Michael Sharrat from the University of Waterloo and Morina Reece from Health Canada explain next steps to the new Guide's steering committee.

Following on the heels of the successful launches of the *Guide* and the *Guide for Older Adults*, the new version for children and youth will attempt to address the critical issue of low physical activity levels among young Canadians.

Two-thirds of Canadian children aren't active enough for optimal growth and development, and both children and youth are spending an increasing amount of time sitting inside watching television, playing computer games, and surfing the Internet instead of being physically active. About equal numbers of children (ages 5-12) and youth (ages 13-17) are inactive. Overall, more girls than boys are inactive, mainly among teenagers (CFLRI, 1998).

In fact, a recent study published by the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* showed that the average Canadian child is sedentary for three to five hours a day in front of the TV alone. This is on top of the five to seven hours most children spend sitting in school, five days a week.



The new *Guide* is being developed by Health Canada in partnership with the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP). The content will build on the principles set out in the original *Guide*, but go one step further to reflect the unique health needs and interests of growing children and youth.

A National Advisory Committee with experts representing key children and youth organizations has been established to lead the development process. The two meetings held to date determined the Committee's terms of reference, guiding principles, and developed a critical path with a tentative launch period of late 2000 or early 2001.

In addition, the Committee selected the target audiences for the new *Guide* — children and adolescents, as well as their parents, teachers, physicians and community leaders.

(continued on page 8)

## FAST FACTS

### Physical Activity for Children & Youth

- ✓ Two-thirds of Canadian children are not sufficiently physically active for optimal growth and development.
- ✓ Barriers for children to participate in physical activities include: competitive stress; parental pressure to excel; lack of fun; lack of play time; limited opportunity for improvement; and dissatisfaction with the coach or instructor.
- ✓ The likelihood that youth will never smoke is directly related to the level of physical activity — more than 80% of Canadians between the ages of 10 and 24 who are active have never smoked.
- ✓ Girls who are active in sports are 92% less likely to use drugs and 80% less likely to have an unwanted pregnancy.
- ✓ 25% of Canadian children are considered overweight and this figure is on the rise.
- ✓ According to a 1998 Gallup poll, 74% of the Canadian population is in favour of implementing 30 minutes of daily physical education in our schools. However, only 10% of our 15,800 schools have quality physical education programs on a daily basis.

Sources: *The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, Sport Nova Scotia, and The Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*

## Children & Youth Guide Advisory Committee

Members of the National Advisory Committee responsible for the development of *Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children and Youth* include:

- Dr. Michael Sharrat (Co-chair) – University of Waterloo, Dept. of Kinesiology
- Morina Reece (Co-chair) – Fitness & Active Living Unit, Health Canada
- Bill Hearst – Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP)
- Guy Tanguay – Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD)
- Cora Craig – Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI)
- Dr. Claire Leblanc – Canadian Paediatric Society
- Bryna Kopelow – Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS)
- Neil Semenchuk – Canadian Parks & Recreation Association (CP/RA)
- Dr. Larry Brawley – University of Waterloo, Department of Kinesiology and Department of Health Studies and Gerontology
- Dr. Oded Bar-Or – McMaster University/Pediatric Chedoke Hospital, Children's Exercise & Nutrition Centre
- Scott Ogilvie – Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
- Michael Jacino – Health Canada (Marketing and Partnerships Division)
- Paula Hadden-Jokiel – Health Canada (Childhood and Youth Division)
- Michael Arthur – Provincial/Territorial representative

(continued from page 7)

Two scientific papers were also commissioned and completed; the first one by Dr. Larry Brawley of the University of Waterloo focused on the psychosocial issues of physical activity as they relate to children and youth, while the second by Dr. Oded Bar-Or of McMaster University dealt with the biological issues.

The next step in the process will be the further development of the scientific foundation for the *Guide*. This will include an international peer review of the scientific papers and the development of an evaluation framework. Product development will follow next to determine and focus-test a product line, as well as a plan for distributing the line. The third key step before launch is the development of a dynamic communications strategy to outline the goals, challenges, and milestones for the implementation and delivery stage to get the word out about the new *Guide*.

Look for more information and updates on the progress of the *Guide for Children and Youth* in upcoming issues of *LaunchNews*.

## Editorial Board Tour Stimulates *Guide* Media Coverage

"Read This and Walk", "Active Living Begins in Childhood", and "Couch Potatoes at Health Risk Lobby Group Warns" were just some of the provocative headlines generated by a national tour of editorial boards undertaken by several organizations who endorsed *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living*.

The purpose of the initiative was to provide editors of Canada's daily newspapers with detailed, one-on-one information on the link between physical activity and health benefits, as well as to promote the availability of the *Guide* as a free tool to help inactive Canadians get started on the road to better health.

The resulting media coverage is just one more way to raise awareness of the risks of inactivity and encourage action by individuals, organizations, communities and governments to meet the target of reducing the percentage of inactive Canadians by 10 per cent by the year 2003. The reduction target was jointly set in 1997 by federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of fitness, recreation and sport.

The editorial board initiative was organized by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. Also participating in the meetings with editorial and health writers were representatives from the College of Family Physicians of Canada, Go for Green, and the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology.

Editors participating in the tour from major media outlets coast-to-coast were very receptive to the request for a meeting with their reporters to discuss the issue of physical inactivity as a significant health risk. In total, editorial meetings were held in 10 provinces with 14 daily newspapers, including the *Globe & Mail*.



# Guide and Related Tools Lay Foundation for 2000 SummerActive Campaign

Health Canada's national SummerActive campaign added new tools to its arsenal of physical activity resources during the 1999 Campaign. The campaign, which ran between May 14 and June 11 to kick off the summer season, provided community leaders across the country with a package of tips and ideas for fun and unique ways to get Canadians more active, more often.

One of the most popular tools was the new personal challenge activity log used by participants to record their activity type and duration over a two-week period. Completed logs were then entered into a national SummerActive Personal Challenge contest. Approximately 100 SummerActive fun-pack prizes were awarded to lucky participants from coast-to-coast. Other tools included information sheets on how to encourage physical activity within four settings – public health, workplaces, schools and communities. The 2000 campaign will build on the success of these new tools.

"Provincial and territorial feedback about the personal challenge approach to the contest has been extremely positive," said Joe Doiron at Health Canada. "The activity log helped participants plan their activities and track their progress - by all reports, this concept proved a winner for motivating participants of all fitness levels".

Another key element of the campaign was its link to the recently released *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living* - both the original *Guide* and the version for older adults. The *Guides* are the first-ever set of national physical activity guidelines designed to help Canadians improve their health through regular physical activity. An activity log similar to SummerActive's personal challenge log is available on the back of



the centre pull-out section of all *Guide* handbooks.

SummerActive leaders were asked to encourage participants to pick-up a copy of the *Guide* at the offices of official endorsers or order their free copy by calling the toll-free number (1-888-334-9769) or visiting the *Guide* web site at <[www.paguide.com](http://www.paguide.com)>.

The 1999 national SummerActive campaign was supported by a diverse and broad cross-section of organizations such as schools, community associations, retirement homes, fitness clubs, recreation departments, workplaces, health organizations, local and provincial governments, and service clubs - to name a few.

This level of participation could not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of all the provincial and territorial SummerActive representatives and national organizations who helped in the planning, distribution, and implementation of this dynamic annual campaign.

Schools proved a particularly big supporter of the SummerActive concept. Teachers in communities large and small organized programs ranging from massive soccer games, community walks, relay races, field days, and dancing competitions. Some events even reached beyond school walls,

capitalizing on physical activity opportunities for students, their parents, and residents in local neighborhoods. In certain cases, the momentum created by these events was maintained even after the school term ended for summer vacation.

Publicity surrounding the campaign also increased awareness about the importance of physical activity to improved health and the range of physical activity options available to Canadians. In this way, SummerActive reached its objective of contributing to increased levels of physical activity by all Canadians.

Although it is difficult to accurately estimate the total number of individuals who participated in initiatives linked to SummerActive, provincial/territorial representatives report many events attracted much more interest this year.

It is expected that with a coordinated approach to planning and delivery of future campaigns, the momentum will continue to build. Information on the national SummerActive 2000 campaign which will run between May 12 (Sneaker Day) and June 20, will be available in early March. For more information, please contact <[joe-doiron@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:joe-doiron@hc-sc.gc.ca)>.



# Media Training Workshops Help Promote Active Living

A cross-Canada series of one-day workshops on making optimal use of the media to promote active living is helping leaders working at the local, provincial/territorial levels to hone their communications skills.

The fall workshops — a project of the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Fitness and Recreation (F-P/TACFR) made possible by a joint effort between Health Canada and each province or territory — focus on the central theme of “reaching the right people with the right message through the right media.”

“As governments work together on a number of integrated strategies to reduce physical *in*activity among Canadians by the year 2003, we must be more strategic in how we employ media strategies to inform and educate Canadians,” said Health Canada’s Joe Doiron, the project organizer and one of four workshop facilitators.

“More than that, governments understand that they need to be coordinated in their efforts in this area, that they must begin to deliver messages through media in a way that complements and builds upon each others’ efforts,” explained Doiron. “Coordination is a central theme of these workshops.”

“Importantly, it’s not about asking governments and the leaders they work with from non-government sectors to ‘buy in’ to another national media strategy,” he said. “It’s about inviting these players to be part of common but flexible communication platform that recognizes the diverse and distinct roles and responsibilities of these partners and the way they approach communications.”

Workshop participants from both government and community organizations have been learning that to be most successful at promoting the benefits of an active lifestyle, media activities must be determined based on answers to three basic questions:

- Who do we need to reach?
- Which messages should we try to convey?
- Which media should we use?

## Guiding Principles for Media Activities

To make full use of media activities, the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Fitness and Recreation agrees to the following principles:

- Synergy, integration and coordination of the various types and levels of active living interventions and media activities are essential if any significant behaviour changes are to occur to achieve the 10 per cent physical inactivity reduction target;
- Synergy is possible among the various partners as long as coordination and integration are first achieved among federal and provincial/territorial agencies; and
- Local partners who create and offer active living opportunities will only work in synergy with other organizations if they are provided with the tools and opportunities to do so.

Workshop participants are provided with information to build a framework for their organization’s own media relations strategy, including:

- Learning how to segment physically inactive Canadians in order to meet audience-specific needs;
- Developing concise messages and themes;
- Selecting the best media for reaching specific audiences; and
- Working with media to generate coverage of an active living initiative or event.

The workshops help participants to profile their organization’s role in promoting the principles of active living, as well as any related initiatives or products like *Canada’s Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living*.

To date, workshops have been held in most provinces and territories.

*(continued on page 11)*

(continued from page 10)

"This project is an extension of a bigger effort by the F-P/TACFR to develop a framework for planning joint federal-provincial/territorial communications in support of its work plan tied to the 10 per cent target," says Doiron.

"In that context, we know that the work being done by non-government organizations in support of the 10 per cent target is extremely important," furthered Doiron.

"That's why we've planned all along to hold a workshop for representatives of national voluntary organizations (NVOs) at the conclusion of the provincial workshops. NVOs have been sent a letter of invitation to participate in this workshop on March 9 in Ottawa," he said.

In addition to Mr. Doiron, workshop facilitators are Angèle Beaulieu, Communications Officer for the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute; François Lagarde, Social Marketing and Communications Consultant; and Art Salmon, National Technical Director for ParticipACTION.

As a special feature, workshop participants have access to an extensive database of media habits of Canadians for the top 25 markets in Canada. In addition, they are provided with specific information on the national and regional/provincial reach of community newspapers, magazines, daily newspapers, radio and television for six population segments that cover Canadians 12 years of age and over.

The media workshops were established based on a recommendation from the F-P/TACFR. The Committee developed *Physical Inactivity: A Framework for Action* – a document which provides the foundation for federal and provincial/territorial governments to determine priorities and initiatives to reduce physical inactivity among Canadians by 10 per cent by the year 2003.

For more information, please contact <joe\_doiron@hc-sc.gc.ca>.

# Making the Case for Active Living at Work

It surprises many people to learn that, on average, we spend one-third of our lives sleeping. But did you know we also spend half of our waking life at work?

For many of the 15 million working Canadians, that means plenty of time to sit at a desk, hunched over a computer keyboard all day until it's time to drive home in the car only to then watch TV from the sofa.

To make matters worse, more than 52 per cent of the workforce has had little or no access to workplace health programs, rendering two-thirds of Canadians at health risk due to sedentary lifestyles.

"Health Canada's interest in promoting healthier workplaces comes as no surprise. The more we learn about various factors which influence health, the more we appreciate the role of physical activity, nutrition and (workplace) environment on the health of our society." — David Dodge, Deputy Minister of Health, at the Healthy Workplace Awards Ceremony, in October, 1999.

"We have an opportunity where active living policies and programs in the workplace can help employees to improve their health while at the same time positively impact an organization's bottom line," said Randy Adams of Health Canada's Fitness and Active Living Unit.

*"Two thirds of Canadians still lead dangerously inactive lives. We know that a sedentary lifestyle is as big a risk factor as smoking, in terms of health."*

— Allan Rock, Minister of Health  
Speech given at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Medical Association, August, 1999



## Business Case to help leaders make informed decisions

To capitalize on this opportunity, Health Canada is currently developing the *Business Case for Active Living at Work* — the result of the Department's compilation of evidence on the benefits of workplace active living strategies and the consequences of physical inactivity on employees, occupational and organizational health, and other corporate indicators.

The corporate benefits of active living include: reduced absenteeism and turnover, improved employee morale, enhanced productivity, as well as reduced short- and long-term disability and worker's compensation.

(continued on page 12)

(continued from page 11)

## There are compelling reasons to focus on Active Living at Work...

- We now have clear evidence that physical activity is essential to good health.
- 63% of Canadians are still not active enough to obtain health benefits.
- The environments in which people live, work, and play have a significant impact on health.
- 15 million Canadians spend one half of their waking hours at work.
- A majority of employees are reporting increases in stress-related illness.
- 90% of parents working outside the home report stress due to work-family conflicts.
- Active living should be a vital component of comprehensive workplace health and wellness strategies.
- Studies show that workplace active living can:
  - ✓ Improve employee fitness and health;
  - ✓ Improve productivity and morale;
  - ✓ Improve job satisfaction and team spirit;
  - ✓ Reduce absenteeism and turnover;
  - ✓ Reduce stress and back injuries;
  - ✓ Reduce workplace injuries and worker's compensation costs; and
  - ✓ Reduce claims against group benefit plans.

The *Business Case* aims to give business, industry, labour and government a practical tool that will help them make informed decisions about supporting the health and productivity of their workforce through increased physical activity in the workplace.

Active living can be an innovative addition to any employee benefit program, and an important tool in attracting and retaining employees in a world where staff turnover may be as common as a trip to the water cooler.

### Active employees are happier and more productive

Employees who are more active report better health, improved morale, and an increased tolerance for stress. Other benefits of physical activity include improved fitness, stronger muscles and bones, more energy, and improved self-esteem.

"Studies have shown a positive relationship between adequate physical activity and job satisfaction," explained Mr. Adams. "Higher job satisfaction leads to better employee morale, which then leads to increased productivity."

### Business Case web site will be an online resource

Designed as a web site with leaders in business, industry, labour and government, as well as employees themselves in mind, the *Business Case* is an online data source complete with "how-to" sections and tips in a flexible, interactive and user-friendly format.

The *Business Case* is also intended to support workplace active living service providers in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

The *Business Case* will allow users from organizations of various sizes to make the case internally to senior decision-makers about building, improving or bolstering their organization's workplace active living policies and programs.

### Next steps to official launch

Currently, the various draft modules of the *Business Case* are being reviewed by researchers and experts from the workplace health promotion community to ensure both accuracy and relevance to its intended end-users.

Once the content has been finalized, the *Business Case* will be posted on a web site that will feature direct links to Health Canada's home pages for *Canada's Physical Activity Guide* ([www.paguide.com](http://www.paguide.com)) and its companion products.

The *Business Case* web site is scheduled for national launch later this year. For more information, please contact <[randy\\_adams@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:randy_adams@hc-sc.gc.ca)>.

## LAUNCHnews

Thanks for reviewing this fourth issue of *LaunchNews*! *LaunchNews* is produced on an ad hoc basis to keep you up-to-date on the latest news about *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living* and its companion products. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions for *LaunchNews*, please contact Randy Adams of Health Canada by e-mail ([randy\\_adams@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:randy_adams@hc-sc.gc.ca)) or fax (613-941-6666).