



***Issues of Substance*, CCSA's national conference, helps address calls for greater coordination in Canada's substance abuse and addictions field**

MARKHAM, Ont., Nov. 14—Persistent calls for a more coordinated approach to substance abuse problems in Canada are being addressed as the *Issues of Substance* national conference starts here today at the Hilton Suites and runs until Wednesday. The conference is hosted by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), Canada's national addictions agency, and is the first substance abuse conference of its size and scope since CCSA was established in 1988.

“We know that there have been a number of successful regional conferences on alcohol and other drugs in Canada over the past decade and that similar events have taken place on the international stage,” said Michel Perron, CCSA's Chief Executive Officer and *Issues of Substance* Conference Chair. “However, what has been lacking until now is a forum for this type of comprehensive dialogue at a *national* level in Canada.”

More than 400 substance abuse and addictions professionals will choose from 120 presentations by leading experts based on the most up-to-date knowledge in the field. The first full day begins with a message of welcome from federal Health Minister Ujjal Dosanjh followed by a keynote address by Dr. Richard Heinzl, founder of Doctors Without Borders Canada. In an address entitled “Lessons From Abroad: Turning Walls Into Windows”, Dr. Heinzl will talk about the importance of a non-conventional approach to problem solving.

The goal of the conference is to offer substance abuse professionals a forum to share ideas and to learn about innovation and action in the areas of prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement.

Among the 18 concurrent sessions scheduled for today are presentations on gender and substance abuse; “hardcore” drinking and driving offenders; new research on cannabis use and public attitudes; prison-based needle exchange programs; heavy drinking on campus; youth, violence, alcohol and drug use; methadone maintenance and OxyContin abuse; substance use and “road rage”; and some varied perspectives on drug enforcement, including an argument for legalization.

“The extent to which the absence of a national forum for discussion of emerging issues has been felt among Canadian substance abuse and addictions professionals became clear during cross-Canada consultations leading to a [National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol, Other Drugs and Substances in Canada](#) that began in May 2004,” said Mr. Perron. “The people we met were virtually unanimous in their call for greater coherence and coordination in our field and one of the demands that consistently arose was

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for a national conference devoted to alcohol and other drugs as a vehicle for information exchange and for promoting a greater sense of purpose within our field.”

Delegates will hear an update on the National Framework on Tuesday.

Issues of Substance has received generous support from a number of Conference Partners, including Spirits Canada (Platinum Partner); Brewers of Canada and Éduc’alcool (Gold Partners); Canadian Vintners Association, the Centre for Mental Health and Addiction (CAMH), Purdue Pharma, Schering Canada (Silver Partners); the Canadian Health Network (Refreshment Break Partner) and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) (Conference Program Partner).

For more details, visit the conference website at <http://www.issuesofsubstance.ca/ios/>

Media interested in attending the conference, should check in at the Registration and Information desk in the lower lobby of the Donald Cousens Conference Centre adjacent to the Hilton Suites at 8500 Warden Avenue, Markham, any time after 7:30 a.m. today.

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For more information or to request an interview:
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About CCSA – <http://www.ccsa.ca>

CCSA is Canada's national addictions agency. It was established by an Act of Parliament in 1988 to provide a national focus for efforts to reduce the health, social and economic harm associated with substance abuse and addictions.

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