

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

PROVINCE PROVIDES \$2M FOR STROKE PREVENTION AND CARE

VICTORIA – A \$2-million provincial government grant to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon will enhance the prevention and treatment of strokes, improving health outcomes for British Columbians, announced Health Minister George Abbott.

Abbott and ActNow BC Minister of State Gordon Hogg announced the new funding at an event at the legislature to mark National Hypertension Awareness Week.

“One in six British Columbians has been treated for high blood pressure, which if not diagnosed and properly managed can lead to strokes and other serious health problems,” said Abbott. “This funding builds on previous supports we have provided to the Heart and Stroke Foundation so that British Columbians can better manage high blood pressure, and so they will have better treatment options if they do suffer from a stroke.”

In January, the Province provided the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon with \$500,000 to implement a Stroke Charter that included the implementation of a comprehensive stroke/TIA protocol in all of B.C.’s emergency rooms.

“There are simple preventative measures everyone can take to avoid heart disease, including regular exercise and maintaining a healthy diet,” said Gordon Hogg, Minister of State for ActNow BC. “ActNow BC promotes healthy lifestyle choices, such as reducing your daily sodium intake, which is another way to better manage hypertension.”

Approximately 700,000 people in B.C. have been treated for hypertension, the main cause of a stroke. More than 6,000 British Columbians experience a stroke each year and annually over 2,000 British Columbians die from stroke-related symptoms.

The Province will release a 2007 guideline later this year for physicians to more effectively detect, diagnose and manage patients with hypertension. From April 2006 to January 2007 over 2,000 family physicians identified more than 170,000 patients as people who could benefit from improved management of hypertension.

“Diagnosing hypertension is extremely important in preventing strokes and heart disease, and the investment in the Stroke Charter is vital for improving prevention and care for patients,” said Bobbe Wood, president and CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon. “The generous \$2-million commitment from the B.C. government will allow for improvements in health outcomes across the whole continuum of care by taking an integrated and co-ordinated approach to the prevention and treatment of stroke.”

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.

In March 2006, the Province announced an investment of \$25.2 million in health promotion through a partnership with the BC Healthy Living Alliance Now to:

- Promote wellness and support chronic disease prevention in British Columbia
- Enhance collaboration among government, nongovernment and private sector organizations.
- Increase the capacity of communities to create and sustain health promoting policies, environments, programs and services.

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