

Public Health Agency of Canada

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New Report Helps Canadians Better Understand and Prevent Cardiovascular Disease

OTTAWA, ONTARIO--(Marketwire - June 9, 2009) - The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) today released a new report that will provide Canadians with a greater understanding of cardiovascular disease and how to prevent it. Tracking Heart Disease and Stroke in Canada 2009 provides Canadians with information on major risk factors, on the social and economic impacts of these diseases, and on the rates of cardiovascular disease across the country.

The report was written in collaboration with the Canadian Institute for Health Information, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, Canadian Stroke Network and Statistics Canada.

"The message is clear: by exercising regularly, making healthy food choices and avoiding smoking and alcohol abuse, Canadians can reduce their risk of heart disease and stroke," said the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health. "Our Government is helping families make healthy heart choices through the Canada Food Guide; the children's fitness tax credit; significant new recreational facilities across the country proposed as part of our Economic Action Plan; and our tough, new legislation to ban flavoured tobacco products aimed at young people."

Highlights of the Report:

- There is a decline in mortality rates related to cardiovascular disease in Canada;
- However, four in five Canadians have at least one risk factor (these include high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes);
- Cardiovascular disease costs the Canadian economy approximately \$22.2 billion a year;
- Cardiovascular disease is largely preventable through healthy behaviours.

"The decline in cardiovascular mortality rates is a cause for celebration but not for complacency," said Dr. David Butler-Jones, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada. "Unhealthy behaviours continue to put Canadians at risk."

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada concurs with the need for ongoing action. "The Canadian Heart Health Strategy and Action Plan recommended increased gathering and dissemination of Canadian data," said Sally Brown, CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. "But it's

what we do with the data that will make a difference."

Other initiatives that the Government has undertaken to help fight heart disease include \$112.8 million in funding for the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (2007-2008) and \$190 million over five years (starting in 2005) for the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative .

The data also demonstrate that stroke is a bigger problem than was previously believed. Dr. Antoine Hakim, CEO and Scientific Director of the Canadian Stroke Network, noted that, "Canadians need to address risk factors early before they cause damage to the brain or lead to dementia."

Tracking Heart Disease and Stroke in Canada 2009 can be accessed at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/2009/cvd-avc/index-eng.php>. For further information on maintaining a healthy heart, please visit our Website <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>.

Egalement disponible en francais

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