

## Launch of Canadian 30-Year Cancer Prevention Study

**June 11, 2008 – Montreal, Quebec** – Today marks the official launch of *The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project* – a study of 300,000 Canadians that explores how genetics, environment, lifestyle and behaviour contribute to the development of cancer.

The largest of its kind in this country, the pan-Canadian study will track randomly selected Canadians (ages 35 to 69) for at least the next 20 to 30 years. It will gather information on health and lifestyle through surveys and the collection of blood and other specimens. The information will help researchers, policy-makers and others understand how different combinations of risk-factors lead to cancer.

“This is a landmark moment for Canada,” said Jeff Lozon, Chair of the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer – an independent organization funded by the federal government to accelerate action on cancer control that is providing funding for the study. “Every Canadian is touched by cancer – whether personally or through family or friends. *The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project* will build an enormous bank of information that Canadian and international researchers can draw upon in the short-term and create a legacy for future generations.”

*The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project* is an example of how Canada is forging ahead as a leader in the field of cancer prevention research worldwide. Over the coming years, this study will be a major contributor to global research to identify the causes of cancer and ultimately prevent people from getting the disease in the first place,” said Federal Health Minister Tony Clement.

*The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project* is being driven forward by partner organizations in five regions: the BC Cancer Agency, the Alberta Cancer Board, Cancer Care Ontario with the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, Quebec’s CARTaGENE project, and Cancer Care Nova Scotia with Dalhousie University collaborating for work in the Atlantic Provinces. Study funding is comprised of \$42 million in support from The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, along with regional commitments of \$41 million. These committed funds will be leveraged to trigger further investment with an anticipated total of more than \$100 million in six to nine months.

“We need to better understand how and why people develop cancer in the first place, and to do that we must explore how our environment, lifestyle and genetic make-up interact to create cancer risks so that we can better address them head on,” said Dr. Heather Bryant, Vice-President, Cancer Control, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. “This is a complicated set of diseases. We have made significant progress in preventing many cancers and in managing and treating others, but the information from this research will fuel better prevention and screening programs – the cornerstones of reducing the number of Canadians getting cancer.”

## How the Study Works

*The Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project* is a prospective cohort study, meaning researchers will follow a large group of people over a long period of time. It is designed to regularly capture data from average Canadians who are randomly selected from a wide range of backgrounds and regions. The goal is to secure a more complete picture of people's health and habits including what they eat and how much they exercise, as well as environmental variables such as where people work and live. The impact of screening and prevention programs will also be assessed. The goal is to enroll 300,000 people and follow them over the duration of the project.

Researchers will regularly examine the data and, in the short-term, expect to gather insight into how Canadians are responding to public health and prevention programs. Longer-term, researchers will be looking for patterns among people who develop cancer. Over the life of the study, researchers will be able to test theories about cancer risks, and will be able to map the onset of other life-threatening and chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

## The Gold Standard

“This is the gold standard of cancer studies. By using modern data collection and exposure measurements – and focusing on environmental and lifestyle risk factors – this study will make a major contribution to worldwide research,” says Dr. Bryant. “Unlike studies that examine retrospectively the causes that may have led an individual to develop cancer – relying on a person’s recall of habits and exposures – this study will allow researchers to regularly consider an impressive array of complex variables that would not be otherwise possible to capture.”

The pan-Canadian project is built on the successful foundation of the Alberta Cancer Board’s Tomorrow Project, which has enrolled 30,000 people. Useful insights into lifestyle factors that may contribute to cancer are already being generated from that work. Examples include determining factors that predict use of cancer screening tests and barriers affecting participation in physical activity.

## About The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer

The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer is an independent organization funded by the federal government to accelerate action on cancer control for all Canadians. We are bringing together cancer survivors, patients and families, cancer experts and government representatives to implement the first pan-Canadian cancer control strategy. Our vision is to be a driving force to achieve a focused approach that will help prevent cancer, enhance the quality of life of those affected by cancer, lessen the likelihood of dying from cancer, and increase the efficiency of cancer control in Canada.

“Partnerships such as this study are the cornerstone of our organization’s mandate of working together to accelerate action on cancer control for all Canadians and we are pleased that our support is allowing a project of this magnitude to become a reality,” says Jessica Hill, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer.

For more information, please go to: [www.partnershipagainstcancer.ca](http://www.partnershipagainstcancer.ca).

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