



For immediate release

ACICR launches new province-wide preventable injury strategy in Alberta *Over 1,600 Albertans die each year due to preventable injuries*

Edmonton, AB (September 9, 2013) – The Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research (ACICR), in partnership with The Community Against Preventable Injuries (Preventable), is pleased to announce the launch of a new province-wide social marketing strategy focused on changing attitudes and behaviours around preventable injuries.

According to a 2009 study, Alberta has the highest per capita injury costs in Canada at \$918 per person, compared to the national average of \$621 per person.

“Alberta has the highest injury rates in all of Canada and most of these injuries are preventable,” said Alberta Health Minister Fred Horne. “We all have a role reducing the frequency and severity of injuries. Understanding injury prevention and becoming aware of the risks in everyday life is the first step to create a safer environment for Albertans to live, work and play.”

Funded through a \$500,000 grant provided by the Government of Alberta, the campaign will use integrated advertising, guerilla marketing activities and social media to reach Albertans. The campaign challenges people to adjust their behaviours by having a word with themselves, thinking before they act, and remembering to exercise preventive measures at all times whether on the road, at work, home, play or in water.

“Many people aren’t aware of the risks, and think that an accident won’t happen to them. Ninety-five per cent of all injuries are preventable and predictable,” says Dr. Ian Pike, spokesperson for Preventable. “We’re delighted to welcome the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research to our growing community of members interested in driving awareness of this serious issue.”

“The human and financial toll of preventable injuries is shocking – in Alberta alone, the total economic burden due to intentional and unintentional injuries is estimated to be \$2.94 billion annually,” says Dr. James Talbot, Chief Medical Officer of Health for Alberta. “As a leader in injury prevention, the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research is partnering with Preventable and asking Albertans to consider the consequences in human suffering and economic cost of not taking preventative measures.”

ACICR is a provincial organization committed to advancing the impact of prevention, emergency response, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries in Alberta. The organization is part of the School of Public Health, University of Alberta and is funded by the Government of Alberta.

In 2008, ACICR launched the Finding Balance campaign to increase awareness of falls prevention among older Albertans. The campaign encourages real life strategies older adults can implement to reduce their risk of falling so they can stay active and independent.

Having launched five years ago in British Columbia, Preventable has evolved to include private and public organization partners including TELUS, London Drugs, and Parachute Canada. The Community members are working together through campaign and community activities to address the epidemic of preventable injuries.

Provincial injury statistics will inform campaign activities and locations in Alberta. Preventable campaigns have included guerrilla marketing tactics encouraging cyclists, skateboarders and skiers ‘to have a word with themselves’ about helmet safety and innovative road safety campaigns directed at drivers in school zones. The Alberta strategy builds on the momentum of these initiatives, and uses the combined expertise and resources of the ACICR and Preventable teams.



PREVENTABLE INJURY STATISTICS:

While injuries are preventable they continue to be a leading cause of mortality, morbidity and disability in Alberta. Every year between 2001 and 2010 an average of:

- **1,669 Albertans died from injuries; more than 4 injury deaths per day.**
- 28,877 Albertans were hospitalized for injuries; 79 injury hospitalizations per day.
- **431,705 Albertans visited emergency departments due to injuries; 1,183 injury visits per day.**

Injuries are a major cost burden on the health system, lead to substantial losses of productivity and cause personal and family hardships.

- The latest study released in 2009 using 2004 injury data shows that the economic burden due to preventable injuries in Alberta was estimated to be **\$2.94 billion annually for both unintentional and intentional (suicide, self-harm and violence) injuries.**

Alberta's premature mortality (potential years of life lost) due to injuries was the highest in Canada:

- 1,479.2 potential years of life lost compared to the national average of 993.3.

To learn more about preventable injuries, visit www.acicr.ualberta.ca and www.preventable.ca.

ABOUT ALBERTA CENTRE FOR INJURY CONTROL & RESEARCH

The Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research (ACICR) is a provincial organization committed to advancing the impact of prevention, emergency response, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries in Alberta. ACICR is part of the School of Public Health, University of Alberta and is funded by Alberta Health.

ABOUT PREVENTABLE

Preventable (also known as The Community Against Preventable Injuries) is the first-ever organization to undertake a provincial social marketing strategy focusing on preventable injuries. Established to raise awareness, transform societal attitudes, and ultimately change behaviours, Preventable uses provocative communication to reach people at the moment of risk.

"Have a Word with Yourself" is Preventable's current campaign that speaks to the little voice inside your head that knows that sometimes bad things can happen – but that we each have the power to prevent them. Preventable is a registered non-profit organization representing a true partnership of more than 80 members, including businesses, injury prevention organizations and government. Our goal is simple: to change attitudes in order to significantly reduce the number and severity of preventable injuries in Canada.

MEDIA CONTACT

Almira Bardai
Jive Communications
Tel: 604-561-7516
Email: almira@jivecommunications.ca

John Muir
Alberta Health, Communications
Tel: 780-422-7951
Email: john.muir@gov.ab.ca