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July 3, 2008

Honourable Mary Polak  
Minister for Healthy Living and Sport  
Room 325 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Polak:

On behalf of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. and Yukon and the BC Lung Association, which make up the Clean Air Coalition of B.C., we want to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Minister for Healthy Living and Sport. We look forward to working with you to enhance the lives of British Columbians through promoting healthy living.

One of the most important aspects of a healthy life is living tobacco-free and protecting all from the hazards of second-hand smoke. At one time, British Columbia was the leader in tobacco control with leading edge programs and services, however many other jurisdictions in Canada have pushed the boundaries of tobacco control which has made BC a follower, not a leader. While we do have the lowest per capita smoking rate in Canada, this only reveals part of the overall picture. We trail Ontario and Quebec in terms of the most people who smoke in Canada provinces. In BC, about 640,000 people use tobacco products daily or occasionally. We cannot allow ourselves to become complacent in our tobacco control efforts as there is much to be done to stop youth from uptake, help people to quit and remain smoke-free and protect British Columbians from second-hand smoke.

Collectively, we have many on-going initiatives in tobacco control. One that we want to bring to your attention is our *IMAGINE! A Smoke-Free BC* campaign. We are asking individuals and organizations to endorse a set of eleven principles, these with an end goal of having British Columbia become a smoke-free/tobacco-free province. The campaign has garnered support from a variety of organizations, including renowned organizations in health and wellness and hundreds of individuals.

We welcome the opportunity to speak to you about the *IMAGINE! A Smoke-Free BC* campaign as well as about other strategies that we can collectively undertake to make BC a healthier province through tobacco control efforts. We have asked our Director, Jack Boomer, to be in touch with your office to arrange a meeting to explore how we can work together to support BC becoming the healthiest jurisdiction to host the Olympic Games.

Sincerely,

R.F. Bobbe Wood, MA  
President & CEO  
Heart and Stroke Foundation  
of B.C. & Yukon

Scott McDonald  
Executive Director  
BC Lung Association

cc. Jack Boomer, Director, Clean Air Coalition of B.C.