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MEDIA RELEASE

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BC FALLS BEHIND OTHER PROVINCES IN PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES

Vancouver, B.C. – BC has the distinction of being one of the last three jurisdictions in Canada that has **not** implemented 100% smoke-free legislation to protect workers and the public equally from second-hand smoke, at a time when the Premier is on record as wanting to make British Columbia the healthiest jurisdiction to host the Olympics.

“It is admirable to want to be the best, however when other provinces are bounding ahead to create healthy environments for workers and the public, it is inconceivable that we would be lagging behind on something so straightforward as smoke-free workplace and public places,” stated Bobbe Wood, Chief Executive Officer of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. & Yukon.

Second-hand smoke is a Class A Carcinogen, and has been declared such by Health Canada. Minimal exposure can elevate a person’s heart rate, and repeated exposure can lead to disability and death. Heather Crowe, a hospitality worker in Ontario who worked in a smoky environment for many years, is dying from lung cancer despite never having smoked in her life.

Studies continue to be released demonstrating the harm caused by second-hand smoke. A study published in the November 2005 International Journal of Cancer indicates that passive smoking (or second hand smoke) raises the risk of breast cancer, especially in pre-menopausal women, to a degree similar to active smoking.

“This Christmas season, we are encouraging our volunteers and members to send Premier Campbell a post card asking him for a smoke-free Christmas,” said Scott McDonald, Executive Director of the BC Lung Association. “What a wonderful present it would be for him to implement 100% smoke-free public place legislation where workers and the public can breathe clean air.”

Added Wood, “Making BC smoke-free is one of the simplest and easiest things that could be done to support good health, save lives and put us in good company with most other jurisdictions in Canada.”

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