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MEDIA RELEASE

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WHERE YOU WORK, LIVE AND PLAY . . . EVEN BETTER SMOKE-FREE

Vancouver, B.C. – The theme of 2006 National Non Smoking Week is “Where you work, live and play . . . even better smoke-free”, and the theme is appropriate for British Columbia. Second-hand smoke causes death and disability and is the third leading cause of cancer behind smoking and alcohol-related deaths. According to the BC Provincial Health Officer’s 2003 annual report, it is estimated to cause at least 108 deaths each year in the province.

Many people believe that BC has the best smoke-free public place laws in Canada. At one time, that was true; but not anymore. “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,” stated Scott McDonald, Executive Director of the BC Lung Association.

“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 workplaces and public places,” stated Bobbe Wood, Chief Executive Officer of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. & Yukon.

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.

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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The Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon and the BC Lung Association work collaboratively together to support smoke-free environments through the Clean Air Coalition of BC.

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