



*ACT FOUNDATION OF CANADA, Jun 8, 2010 - 04:00*

## **ACT Foundation: New Funding Extends Opportunity to All B.C. Public Secondary Schools for Lifesaving CPR Training**

RICHMOND (Marketwire)—Thanks to a \$500,000 contribution from pharmaceutical leaders AstraZeneca Canada, Pfizer Canada and sanofi-aventis, the lifesaving ACT High School CPR Program opportunity can now be extended to all BC public secondary schools.

Currently, 180 BC public secondary schools have been set up with ACT High School CPR Program.

Thanks to this generous donation, over 80 more BC public secondary schools can now receive the program. With this new support the number of students trained each year is expected to jump from 34,000 to 48,000 and teachers trained will go from 675 to over 1,000.

The funds will purchase and distribute 3,555 CPR mannequins and other training materials for schools.

“We know the majority of cardiac arrest victims do not receive citizen CPR. What the research shows is that if CPR is started quickly at the scene, survival rates can be improved by almost fourfold. Yet it’s estimated that less than 15 per cent of British Columbians have these skills,” says ACT Foundation Executive Director Sandra Clarke. “That’s why the support we’ve received from AstraZeneca Canada, Pfizer Canada and sanofi-aventis will have a profound impact on our communities.”

This program is also supported by a partnership between the ACT Foundation, the British Columbia Ambulance Service (BCAS) and the Ambulance Paramedics of British Columbia – CUPE Local 873. Paramedics, when available, volunteer to train teachers as CPR instructors, who then in turn train students with the skills to respond to a range of emergencies including heart attack and cardiac arrest emergencies, stroke, choking and drowning.

“Educators across the province continue to show leadership in ensuring students have access to the best skills to support the health of their communities,” says Minister Margaret MacDiarmid, BC Minister of Education. “Learning how to save a life is an empowering experience that can have a profound impact on our students.”

“By equipping public secondary schools in British Columbia with quality resources and guidance on program set-up, teachers are then able to teach CPR to students as part of the curriculum. This ensures a long-term, self-sustaining program which reaches all youth, including those who do not have easy access or cannot afford to pay for a public course,” says Paul Lévesque, President of Pfizer Canada.

“Saving lives through research and discovery of innovative therapies is one of our major goals,” says Hugh O’Neill, president and CEO of sanofi-aventis and Chair of the ACT Foundation. “There are many ways to save lives, however, and in an emergency situation, sometimes there’s only one way. That’s why, for nearly 20 years, we’ve maintained our support for the ACT Foundation and its programs to educate citizens in emergency lifesaving techniques such as CPR.”

“This is a great example of how a partnership between the private sector and a not-for-profit can have a major impact on the health of our communities,” says Marion McCourt, President and CEO, AstraZeneca Canada. “We’re pleased that our support has helped ACT expand its program in British Columbia to teach students how to recognize heart attack and stroke symptoms, and administer CPR. These important skills literally help students save lives.”

### **About the ACT Foundation**

The ACT Foundation is a national, award-winning charitable organization dedicated to promoting health and empowering Canadians to save lives. ACT’s national health partners are AstraZeneca Canada, Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, Pfizer Canada and sanofi-aventis, which provide sustaining funding and are committed to the Foundation’s goal of establishing CPR as a mandatory program in every Canadian high school. The Foundation and its health partners are winners of Imagine Canada’s “New Spirit of Community Partnership” Award. For more information visit [www.actfoundation.ca](http://www.actfoundation.ca), or view a selection of videos on our student heroes at [www.youtube.com/theactfoundation](http://www.youtube.com/theactfoundation).

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