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ACT Foundation: Mass CPR Training for Aboriginal Youth Leaders

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA--(Marketwire - March 12, 2010) - More than 150 Aboriginal youth leaders will be empowered to save lives today at a mass CPR training led by the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation.

The training, which will be held at the *Gathering Our Voices: 2010 Provincial Aboriginal Youth Conference*, will teach CPR to more than 150 youth between the ages of 14 and 24. Youth will also receive an introduction to Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). The Medtronic Foundation has provided funds to support this mass-training which is being taught by St. John Ambulance.

"The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres is very excited to partner with the ACT Foundation in providing free CPR training to youth delegates at our eighth annual *Provincial Aboriginal Youth Conference*," said Paul Lacerte, Executive Director – BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC). "This is the first year this amazing learning opportunity is available, and I know it will be of great benefit to all Aboriginal youth participating."

"CPR is an important skill for people to have and to bring that knowledge back to their communities," said Minister of Education Margaret MacDiarmid. "I'm happy to see so many youth take advantage of this opportunity to learn valuable lifesaving techniques."

Eight in 10 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur at home, and research indicates that citizen CPR response can improve survival rates by almost fourfold.

"Only approximately eight per cent of British Columbians are trained in CPR which is not very high when compared to a number of other jurisdictions," said British Columbia Ambulance Service (BCAS) Vice President, Medical Programs Jim Christenson. "Every minute that goes by without assistance reduces a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival by around 10 per cent, therefore increasing the number of people trained in CPR benefits our families, friends and communities."

"The youth here today are well-known for their leadership skills, and we are thrilled that they will be able to take their lifesaving training and health education back to their communities," said Sandra Clarke, Executive Director of the ACT Foundation.

Throughout BC, the ACT Foundation is working in partnership with BCAS and the paramedics' union, the Ambulance Paramedics of British Columbia – CUPE Local 873, as well as community partners to bring the ACT High School CPR Program to all BC public secondary schools. BCAS provides ongoing project funding, and paramedics volunteer their time to train secondary school teachers to teach CPR to their students.

The ACT Foundation is a national, award-winning charitable organization driving a campaign to establish CPR training in secondary schools across Canada. To date, the ACT High School CPR Program has trained 1.4 million youth in 1,350 schools. ACT raises funds to donate mannequins, teacher training, manuals and other materials to schools and then guides schools in program set-up to ensure long-term sustainability of the program. Teachers train their students as a regular part of the curriculum. Core health partners behind ACT's efforts in BC and across the country are AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, Pfizer Canada and sanofi-aventis.

For more information please visit www.actfoundation.ca or www.youtube.com/theactfoundation.

You can also follow ACT on Twitter at www.twitter.com/actfoundation.

For more information, please contact

ACT Foundation
Jessey Bird
Manager of Media Relations
613-729-3455
Cell: 613-286-5260
jbird@actfoundation.ca