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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2012HLTH0050-000638  
May 10, 2012

Ministry of Health  
ParticipACTION

### **B.C. leads Canada with ParticipACTION partnership**

VICTORIA – The Province today announced the formalization of the first provincial partnership with the national, non-profit organization ParticipACTION to further promote healthy living and physical activity in British Columbia.

Health Minister Michael de Jong and ParticipACTION president and CEO Kelly Murumets made the announcement today, Move for Health Day, by joining elementary school children for a fun lunchtime workout.

From 1971, the ParticipACTION name has been the brand behind which millions of Canadians have rallied to promote activity, fitness and healthy living. The partnership will build on British Columbia's reputation for leading Canada in making the country the healthiest on Earth.

The Province is supporting the announcement with the investment of \$6 million in the partnership with ParticipACTION.

ParticipACTION will work with B.C.'s Ministry of Health in the planning and development of ParticipACTION's new social marketing campaign that will continue to inspire and support parents to get their children and families more physically active.

ParticipACTION will augment the national campaign with a B.C.-specific co-branded strategy, which includes an integrated community engagement and social media approach that will target B.C. communities. ParticipACTION will also engage B.C. organizations and communities in the third annual Sports Day in Canada on Sept. 29, 2012. ParticipACTION and the Province will develop and implement an annual plan that integrates and profiles the partnership activities that will be unveiled in the coming months.

"Unless immediate actions are taken today, British Columbia's students may be the first generation to have a shorter life span than their parents," said de Jong. "Physical activity is one way to combat obesity and increase life expectancy, and that is why we are bringing ParticipACTION to B.C. This partnership will help create a healthier, happier British Columbia."

“An active British Columbia is a strong and prosperous British Columbia,” said Murumets. “Through this innovative model of federal/provincial/territorial collaboration, we will work together to support and encourage B.C. families to move more, every day. With the role that physical activity plays in promoting health, longevity, academic readiness, mental health and social cohesion, a society that moves more is a society that thrives.”

The partnership supports Healthy Families BC, a public-health strategy that addresses chronic disease – such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer – and obesity prevention among British Columbian families and communities with a focus on healthy eating and physical activity. Visit Healthy Families BC online at: [www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca](http://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca)

### **About ParticipACTION:**

ParticipACTION is the national voice of physical activity and sport participation in Canada. Originally established in 1971, ParticipACTION was re-launched in 2007 to help prevent the looming inactivity crisis that faces Canada.

As a national not-for-profit organization solely dedicated to inspiring and supporting healthy and active living for Canadians, it works with its partners, which include sport, physical activity, recreation organizations, government and corporate sponsors, to inspire and support Canadians to move more.

ParticipACTION is generously supported by Sport Canada. For more information, visit: [www.participACTION.com](http://www.participACTION.com)

A backgrounder follows.

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Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [www.gov.bc.ca/connect](http://www.gov.bc.ca/connect)

# BACKGROUND

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Physical activity can lead to a healthier, longer life

- Physical activity helps to prevent chronic diseases like various forms of cancer, Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.
- Evidence shows that if we are physically active, achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, enjoy a healthy diet and refrain from smoking, we can reduce our risk factors for most chronic diseases by up to 80 per cent. In turn, living a longer, healthier, happier life and saving millions annually in health-care associated costs.
- Physical inactivity is the number-one factor contributing to the obesity of men and women. Only 15 per cent of Canadian adults get the 150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity required per week for health benefits. While only seven per cent of Canadian children and youth get the 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity required each day for health benefits.
- British Columbia has the lowest rates of overweight and obese adult in the country at about 45 per cent.
- Childhood overweight and obesity rates are rising in Canada. British Columbia has the lowest incidence of childhood obesity in the county. However, B.C. is in the middle of the pack when assessing the levels of overweight children in Canada.
- Obesity rates in children have almost tripled in the last 25 years. Approximately 26 per cent of Canadian children aged 2-17 years are currently overweight or obese.
- In British Columbia, 51,000 children (seven per cent) aged 2-17 years were classified as obese and 138,500 (20 per cent) as overweight.
- About 2,000 British Columbians die prematurely every year due to obesity-related illnesses, such as heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.
- Obesity-related illnesses cost the British Columbia health system an estimated \$380 million annually, or 4.5 per cent of total direct health-care costs in the province.
- When productivity losses due to obesity, including premature death, absenteeism and disability, are added, the total cost of obesity to the British Columbia economy is estimated at between \$730 million and \$830 million a year.
- Obese Canadians are four times more likely to have diabetes, 3.3 times more likely to have high blood pressure and 56 per cent more likely to have heart disease than those with healthy weights. Obese individuals are 50 to 100 per cent more likely to die prematurely from all causes than those with healthy weights

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