

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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31 Groups Across B.C. Get \$214,000 for Mental Health and Addictions Training – Plus a Chance to Apply for More

Vancouver –Thirty-one projects led by groups across the province have been given awards in the \$6,000 to \$7,000 range, for a total value of \$214,000, from the Community Action Initiative. The awards will let the groups plan for training to better serve clients facing mental health and substance use challenges. Funded projects will also be eligible to apply for a next round of funding, to implement training projects ranging from \$100,000 to \$200,000, for a total of roughly \$2 million, Barb Keith, co-chair of the CAI, announced today.

“We believe in the power of communities to help with the mental health and substance use challenges faced by some of their citizens,” said Mrs. Keith. “And training can be a powerful tool to ensure this help is effective. Our aim is to help communities identify and respond to their own training needs. When service providers have the right training, they can make an even bigger difference in their clients’ lives. Most of them already know what training they need- we’re just giving the money to help make it happen.”

Fellow co-chair Paul Lacerte added: “This latest round of grants is for convening activities, to help community groups and their partner agencies and work through the details of larger training projects to help all the partners. Ideally, as they get this training together, it might also lead to some innovative new solutions to persistent problems. We need many ideas to help. That’s why with this award, and all of our grants so far since 2010, we fund work done through partnerships. ”

Through an initial grant from the Province of British Columbia, CAI’s work helps complement the province’s *Healthy Minds, Healthy People: A Ten-Year Plan to Address Mental Health and Substance Use in British Columbia*, which was released in 2010 and takes a transformative approach to these important health issues.

This latest round of CAI-funded projects will allow communities to explore projects like:

- Volunteer training for seniors to serve as ambassadors to other seniors in modeling responsible alcohol and prescription drug use (led by the Richmond Addiction Services Society);

- A province-wide program to develop training materials for building the capacity of families and school-community partners to promote and support positive mental health in children and youth (led by the Directorate of Agencies for School Health BC);
- Training for addictions counselors and support workers to better address underlying causes of substance use and mental health challenges faced by men (led by the Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre);
- Culturally-appropriate harm-reduction and resiliency training for service providers working with First Nations clients in Sechelt (led by the Sechelt Indian Band); and
- Volunteer training to help mothers facing a high risk of mental health and substance use issues (led by the Addiction Recovery Coach of Canada).

With today's announcement, the CAI has granted over \$4 million to promote collaboration and innovation in the delivery of services to address mental health and substance use challenges since 2010, and has funded projects led by over 130 different community-based agencies. More than half of this money has directly helped children and youth, with a strong focus on the prevention of mental illness and promotion of good mental health. CAI has also helped community service providers to access training to better respond to Aboriginal clients, allocating another \$50,000 to allow 200 people from 145 community-based agencies to take the Indigenous Cultural Competency on-line course created by the BC Provincial Health Services Authority, and by allocating one-third of its total funding to date to projects led by Aboriginal organizations.

About the Community Action Initiative

In 2008, the B.C. government provided the B.C. Alliance for Mental Health/Illness and Addiction with \$10 million, enabling the Alliance to establish the CAI. The CAI supports community action to promote mental health, prevent substance use problems and support treatment when problems occur. The CAI funding includes three specific funding streams: convening, service innovation and training. The CAI is governed by a Leadership Council that includes community-based mental health and substance use organizations, professional associations, aboriginal organizations, labour, business and provincial ministries. For more information on the CAI please visit www.communityactioninitiative.ca

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