



Helping to prevent obesity in Ontario's Aboriginal children

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Toronto, May 19, 2009... Health Nexus is pleased to announce a new project that will help to improve the health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children and communities across Ontario.

Health Nexus recently received a grant of \$242,200 over a 2-year period from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to develop a culturally appropriate toolkit and provide province-wide training focusing on preventing early childhood obesity in Ontario's Aboriginal populations.

"We support new programs like this because childhood obesity can often lead to the onset of diabetes," says David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for Ontario. "As part of our \$741 million Diabetes Strategy, we will focus on at-risk communities like the Aboriginal population. This new program certainly complements our goal to prevent and better manage chronic diseases."

Health Nexus is a bilingual charitable organization that enhances community well-being by equipping service providers with useful learning materials and training on a wide variety of topics, and advocating for policies and resources that promote health and prevent disease. Health Nexus (formerly the Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse) has existed for more than 20 years.

"We're honoured that we have this opportunity to work with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people of Ontario to develop useful tools that will help to improve the lives of children and future generations," says Connie Clement, executive director of Health Nexus. The toolkit will be led and guided by Aboriginal people

"We're committed to ensuring that the voices of Ontario's Indigenous populations are leading this exciting project," explains Clement. "We're very pleased that this grant will further enable us to build relationships and partnerships with organizations and people who care about the health of Aboriginal communities."

Obesity is a growing problem in all communities across Ontario, and one of the largest health issues facing Aboriginal communities because of its relation to other health conditions such as diabetes and stroke. This new toolkit will help service providers understand the wide variety of factors that affect the health of Aboriginal children and people in Ontario. It will also inspire service providers to use traditional approaches and knowledge in their work with children and families.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Government of Ontario. For over 25 years, the Foundation has supported the growth and vitality of communities across the province. The Foundation continues to strengthen the capacity of the volunteer sector through investments in community-based initiatives. For more information, please visit **www.trilliumfoundation.org**.

Any Aboriginal people in Ontario who work in the area of health or with expertise in the area of childhood health and obesity are encouraged to get in touch with Health Nexus at m.ferris@healthnexus.ca to help share their knowledge. You can also visit us on the web at www.healthnexus.ca.

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