

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Building Healthy Communities: Provincial Conference Aims to Bring Health and Wellness to the Community Planning Table

St. John's, NL November 9, 2011 – A provincial event is being organized to raise awareness about how the built environment in Newfoundland and Labrador can have an impact on health in our communities. The conference, entitled *Building Healthy Communities: Bringing Health & Wellness to the Community Planning Table*, will be held November 29-30, 2011, at the Sheraton Hotel in St. John's. The event will provide a forum for professionals and advocates from across a range of disciplines to discuss ideas about how the province can build health and wellness into the very infrastructure of its communities. Delegates will include community leaders, urban planners, engineers, transportation planners, community health workers, rural consultants, educators, architects and recreation managers.

“We want to bring together relevant sectors and groups from across the province, and have this event serve as a starting point for collaboration to improve both the development and sustainability of healthier communities in our province,” explained conference organizer Catherine Donovan, Chair of the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council.

“The built environment is made of the constructed places where we live, learn, play, work and commute. How we plan our communities has a strong impact on our air, soil and water quality, safety, physical activity, stress and even social capital, all of which affect our social, physical, mental and community health.” Donovan noted, adding that the conference will provide an opportunity to establish a common understanding of the built environment and a forum to share knowledge and experiences from policy, practice and research.

Among the topics to be discussed are community planning and design, transportation policies, sustainable happiness, local trail development, pesticide legislation, climate change, age friendly communities and an overview of healthy community projects from across Canada. All chosen topics are intended to reflect the diversity of partnerships required to build healthy communities.

“Bringing health and wellness to the community planning table requires commitment from many different decision makers,” said Minnie Wasmeier, President, Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Association, “By working together, we can continue to bring about change and build healthy communities that improve the health of individuals, families and our communities.”

“This conference will provide delegates with a chance to learn more about how their sector can contribute to a healthy built environment, build new partnerships and strengthen existing links to enhance the built environment in communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador,” Wasmeier said.

“There are many individuals, organizations and communities throughout our province working to enhance the health of our communities,” says Terry Battcock, President, Newfoundland and Labrador Branch of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors, “Through this forum, we will all be given

the opportunity to discuss specific community challenges and hopefully come up with some innovative strategies to build strong, equitable and sustainable communities.”

The conference is supported by several government departments and community organizations. The Newfoundland & Labrador Public Health Association, the Newfoundland and Labrador Branch of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors and the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council have partnered as hosts for the two-day forum.

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About the Building Healthy Communities conference

For any additional information, including details on the programme, please visit the conference website at: www.buildinghealthycommunities.ca.

About the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Association

The Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Association is a voluntary, not for profit, provincial association with a community health perspective that advocates for the social, physical, emotional, economic, and environmental well-being of the people and communities of Newfoundland and Labrador.

About the Newfoundland and Labrador Branch of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors

The Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI) protects the health of all Canadians on environmental public health issues while promoting the science of environmental public health, including food protection, drinking water quality, on-site wastewater disposal, indoor air quality, epidemiology, tobacco reduction as well as many emerging issues and challenges.

About the Provincial Wellness Advisory Council

The Provincial Wellness Advisory Council is appointed by the Minister of Health and Community Services to provide advice and guidance on planning for the promotion of health and wellness in the province. Its membership reflects a diverse membership including community groups, various government sectors, municipalities and professional organizations.