

For immediate release:

November is Diabetes Month

Montreal, Nov. 2, 2009 – During the month of November, Diabetes Québec and its affiliated associations invite the public to take part in activities organized in every corner of the province to stress the importance of diabetes screening in avoiding the complications associated with this disease. A complete list of activities in every region of Quebec is posted at www.diabete.qc.ca.

November 14, World Diabetes Day, was chosen to honour the birthday of Frederick Banting, the Ontario doctor who discovered insulin in 1921. Its theme, which runs until 2013, is easy to remember: diabetes education and prevention. The goal of this campaign is to prod governments into action. Governments must devise a clear, unequivocal diabetes policy to help control the current worldwide diabetes epidemic. The International Diabetes Federation estimates that 285 million people around the world now suffer from diabetes, up from 150 million scarcely 10 years ago. If nothing is done, this figure could reach 435 million by 2030.

A 2006 United Nations declaration made November 14 World Diabetes Day. This year on November 14, a thousand or so buildings around the world will be illuminated in blue to increase public awareness of the problem. Joining them, in Canada, will be the Frederick Banting House in London, Ontario, and the Bonsecours Market, Notre-Dame Basilica and Olympic Stadium tower in Montreal. A growing number of countries will run public screenings and information sessions. A complete list of international activities is posted on the World Diabetes Day site at www.worlddiabetesday.org.

On November 26, Diabetes Québec will hold a diabetes awareness day at the National Assembly in Quebec City. The association will present a report by experts on the state of diabetes in Quebec, which describes the tragic situation endured by people with diabetes in Quebec. MNAs will then be invited to take a simple diabetes screening test.

“We want the health care network to adopt a diabetes action plan,” says Serge Langlois, president and CEO of Diabetes Québec. “At the present time, the government is not doing enough or deploying enough people to make diabetes a national priority.”

Of the 650,000 Quebecers with diabetes, an estimated 200,000 are unaware that they even have the disease and, consequently, doing nothing to stop its progression. The result is catastrophic. Each year, 40,000 new cases of diabetes are diagnosed in the province. Quebec doctors perform 1,000 foot amputations annually. Diabetes remains the primary cause of blindness in people under 65 years of age; heart attack, the primary cause of death for diabetics. Currently in Quebec, one in every four people who die suffers from diabetes, among other conditions. The costs

associated with diabetes and its complications are in the order of \$3 billion per year for Quebec society.

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