

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Asthma and Allergies: Time for Cleaner Air, Experts Say
For Life and Breath Summit Builds Connection to Better Environment

TORONTO, May 2, 2014 — Experts, including the federal environment minister, met in Toronto yesterday for the **Asthma Society of Canada's** 40th anniversary Summit, **For Life and Breath** and discussed the link between respiratory health and cleaner air.

The summit's keynote speaker, Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq, told the summit participants how the federal government partners with provinces, territories, municipalities and other stakeholders to develop air quality standards so Canadians can respond to pollution challenges such as smog.

"We will continue to work closely with our partners such as the Asthma Society to make great strides in reducing air pollution," the Minister said. She noted that Canada's Air Quality Health Index provides information for 79 communities across Canada, and that since 1990, nationwide emissions of key air pollutants have decreased considerably, in some cases by more than half.

Concerns were raised, however, by Dr. John Molot of the University of Ottawa and Craig Jobber, President of Clinicair Inc., that while outside air quality may be improving, the air we breathe inside of our homes, schools and workplaces is considerably worse. "Canadians spend as much as 97% of their time indoors," said Jobber. "We need to better educate Canadians on the direct impact indoor air quality has on their health," Jobber added.

Dr. Robert Oliphant, President and CEO of the Asthma Society of Canada, said the connection to cleaner air is important so Canadians can better understand and meet the challenges of asthma and respiratory illness.

"It is necessary to make a significant change to the perception that Canadians have of both our disease group and our organization," he said.

"Through 2014, the Asthma Society of Canada is repositioning itself to enable us to better fulfil our vision of every Canadian child and adult with asthma and respiratory allergies living an active and symptom-free life. We want to become leaders in the health and environment field, specifically linking respiratory health with indoor and outdoor air quality in a meaningful, scientifically-defendable manner."

The summit also heard about new developments in asthma and allergy treatment, and from experts such as Ohio State University Visiting Law Professor Brian Sawers, who suggests that certain trees and plants that produce pollen should require permits or licences to be grown in

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urban areas.

More than 3.2 million Canadians have asthma — nearly one in 10 Canadians. In the age of climate change, new research is showing a stronger connection than previously understood between asthma, allergies and air pollution and other environmental issues.

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About Asthma Society of Canada

The Asthma Society of Canada (ASC) is a national charitable volunteer-supported organization devoted solely to enhancing the quality of life and health for people living with asthma and associated allergies through education and research. For more information visit www.asthma.ca or follow us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#)

