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For Immediate Release

Asthma Society of Canada Endorses Asthma Consultation Program Proposed by BC Pharmacists

TORONTO – The Asthma Society of Canada is endorsing the Asthma Consultation Program proposed by British Columbia’s pharmacists. The endorsement is timed to coincide with World Asthma Day on May 7, 2013, the annual event organized to improve asthma awareness and education around the world.

“We are pleased to endorse and support the implementation of a community pharmacy-based asthma program in BC,” said Asthma Society of Canada President & CEO, Dr. Robert Oliphant. “This program will have a positive impact on the health and well-being of 300,000 British Columbians living with asthma.”

The program proposes using pharmacists to provide people living with asthma with the support they need to effectively manage their conditions with proper medication use. The proposal was released by the British Columbia Pharmacy Association on March 12, 2013. Under the program, pharmacists would provide asthma patients with education, assessment and monitoring services as well as care plans for their specific conditions.

Asthma is one of the most common chronic conditions affecting British Columbians. As with other provinces, the number of people diagnosed with asthma in BC has been rising in recent years. The proposed program would provide this growing number of patients with improved access to health services and enhanced levels of care.

“BC pharmacists are delighted to have the Asthma Society of Canada’s support for our proposed Asthma Consultation Program,” said Geraldine Vance, CEO of the British Columbia Pharmacy Association. “We believe implementing an asthma program delivered by community pharmacists can help BC improve health outcomes for asthma patients, reduce emergency visits and curb health costs.”

It is estimated that asthma costs British Columbia’s health care system at least \$41 million annually.

Community pharmacy-based asthma programs, including a study carried out in BC, have been shown to significantly improve health outcomes and medication adherence in asthma patients.

“BC pharmacies are ideally suited to deliver this medication service to people with asthma” added Dr. Oliphant. “Pharmacists already offer medication review services and this program would build on that service to provide asthma patients and their caregivers with regular medication adherence support.”

The Asthma Society of Canada represents more than three million Canadians who suffer from asthma and is focused on providing a balanced voice for asthma in Canada, advancing optimal self-management, prevention, research and health care.

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