



## **Ontarians to Receive Free Medication to Help Them Quit Smoking**

**For Immediate Release - October 26, 2007 (Toronto)** – Ontarians who want to quit smoking have one more way to do it today thanks to a study that will distribute free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and monitor its effectiveness. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in partnership with the Ministry of Health Promotion and Johnson and Johnson and in collaboration with the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is rolling out the STOP (Smoking Treatment for Ontario Patients) Study, the first of its kind in Canada.

While smoking rates in Ontario have declined over the past twenty years, 20% of Ontarians continue to smoke. The good news is that it is not too late to quit.

"If people are able to quit sooner, they may be able to prevent the onset of serious illnesses brought on by smoking," said Dr. Peter Selby, Clinical Director of Addiction Programs, CAMH and Principal Investigator of the STOP Study.

While it has been shown that attempts to quit smoking are more successful when done with the help of a nicotine cessation aid, many people do not use this resource, partially due to cost. The study will distribute nicotine replacement therapy aids free of charge to Ontario residents whose progress will be monitored periodically to track their effectiveness.

"Smoking kills over 16,000 Ontarians each year," said Minister of Health Promotion Jim Watson. "Research such as the STOP Study could prove important to smokers who want to quit smoking, improve their own health, and protect others from the dangers of second-hand smoke."

"We need to do more when it comes to smoking cessation." Says Yves Decoste Tobacco Program Coordinator with the health unit. "We are happy to be partnering with CAMH and the Ministry of Health Promotion in giving the people of Leeds Grenville and Lanark a chance to quit smoking"

**To learn more, see if you qualify, and to register contact the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit at 613-345-5685 Ext. 2224 weekdays only between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm (refer to the "STOP Study")**

Participants will also be given helpful information and resources, such as counseling, to help in the quitting process.

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