

Health Unit Media Release

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LEEDS, GRENVILLE AND LANARK DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT LAUNCHES “BE REALISTIC NOT A STATISTIC” ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE (ATV) SAFETY CAMPAIGN

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is launching its’ **“Be Realistic Not A Statistic”** all-terrain vehicle (ATV) safety campaign during the week of June 23-29, 2007. This campaign highlights the importance of safe driving practices while operating ATVs in an effort to reduce the number of ATV-related injuries.

ATVs have increased in popularity in Ontario with retail sales between 1997 and 2001 more than tripling (*Ontario Registry Analytic Bulletin-December 2003*). This rapid growth of ATV use has led to an increase in injuries. In Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties there were a total of 280-reported ambulatory ATV related injuries between 2002-2006 (*Ministry of Health and Long-term Care Provincial Health Planning Database*). Males aged 16-49 account for 65 percent of these injuries and are therefore the focus of this education campaign.

Injuries can commonly be attributed to alcohol, non-helmet use, improper apparel, speed and inexperience. Most injuries, however, are predictable and can be prevented by following these clear simple messages: **“Ride Sober, Wear a helmet, Slow down, Get trained”**.

The campaign will focus on relaying these safety messages to adult males through the media, community events and direct mail. ATV dealers, service centres, insurance companies, licence bureaus and trails clubs will also be offered resources to share with their clients.

In order to promote the safe use of ATVs, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit has partnered with local agencies such as the Smiths Falls FOCUS Community Coalition, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Ministry of Transportation.

For more information, call the Health ACTION Line at 1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5685 or go to the website at <http://www.healthunit.org/injury/default.htm>.

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