
NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
February 2, 2015

Northern B.C. Men Stepping Up to Healthy Living in the Workplace

The POWER PLAY program begins its next six-week healthy living challenge today with a focus on healthy food choices and physical activity outside of the workplace. The PLAYOFF challenge builds on what the participants have already learned and accomplished over the first six weeks and encourages each man to set new goals for himself. Launched in fall 2014, the first of two six-week interventions focused on getting men moving by challenging them to walk the Great Northern Circle Route and keep track of their steps.

Employees of Excel Trucking, Lomak Bulk Carriers Ltd, the City of Terrace, and Ridley Coal Terminal participated in the first challenge. In the next challenge, they will earn points for each healthy eating choice they make, as well as the time they spend engaged in physical activity outside of work. These points will translate into goals and ice time as men compete in the PLAYOFF hockey challenge.

The program, aimed at improving men's health in the workplace, is a collaboration between the BC and Yukon Division of the Canadian Cancer Society, the BC Cancer Agency, Northern Health, and researchers from Athabasca University and the University of British Columbia. It is funded through a Canadian Cancer Society grant.

Employees involved in the pilot have embraced the friendly competition and they're already noticing a difference in their level of activity. "Physically I feel great, my energy has shot right up and I have more energy to do more. I look fit and my steps have gone up from about 14,000 before the Step Up challenge to 20,000 after," said Lorenzo Webb, an employee of Lomak Bulk Carriers in Prince George.

"The goal is to engage men where they're at right now and encourage them to take steps to improve their health today and for the long term," said Holly Christian, regional lead for men's health, Northern Health.

"Increasing activity and making healthier food choices are small changes that can have a huge impact on lowering risk for chronic disease and cancer," said Margaret Jones-Bricker, regional director for the Northern Region, Canadian Cancer Society, BC and Yukon Division.

"It has been encouraging to see the response from participants as well as the pilot worksites," said Sonia Lamont, provincial director, prevention programming, BC Cancer

Agency. "We're so pleased to hear about the strategies taken by the employers to support their workers during the challenge, as well as the team support and encouragement that is evident."

Steve Dewalt, a shop manager from Lomak Bulk Carriers said, "Now with the POWERPLAY program everyone shares more; about their weekend, their activities, it has helped build the team."

For more information on POWERPLAY and other projects from the harmonization research, visit: www.facebook.com/powerplayprogram or harmonization.ok.ubc.ca/.

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