



## NEWS RELEASE

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Provincial Health Services Authority

### **QuitNow resources help northern patients recover better from surgery**

PRINCE GEORGE – BC's northern [Harmonization Project](#) is launching a new initiative to help surgery patients in northern BC quit smoking before surgery and to stay smoke-free in the long term.

[Stop Smoking Before Surgery](#), available on QuitNow.ca gives information about the benefits of quitting, such as fewer surgical complications, a reduced risk of infection post-surgery and shorter hospital stays.

The Harmonization Project, a collaboration between the BC Cancer Agency, Northern Health and the Canadian Cancer Society, is launching the new resources with the BC Lung Association's QuitNow.ca as part of the *Stop Smoking Before Surgery* initiative for National Non-Smoking Week, January 19-25, 2014.

Tobacco use is one of the five main preventable causes of cancer - in addition to physical inactivity, poor diet, UV exposure and unhealthy body weight - and together these five risk factors account for more than half of all cancer cases in BC.

Approximately 3,000 (23 per cent) of the 13,000 non-emergency surgeries performed annually in the Northern Health region are performed on people who use tobacco. A survey of Northern Health surgical patients found that only 8 per cent of smokers had quit prior to their surgery. However, 63 per cent of patients who smoked reported that they were planning to quit.

#### **Stop Smoking Before Surgery resources:**

- Visit the website at <http://www.quitnow.ca/tools-and-resources/quitting-resources/stop-smoking-before-surgery>
- <http://www.quitnow.ca/helping-others-quit/healthcare-providers/what-works/stop-smoking-before-surgery>
- <http://www.quitnow.ca/helping-others-quit/healthcare-providers/download-materials.php#stop-smoking-before-surgery>

**More information on the northern Harmonization Project:**

- The northern Harmonization Project is a collaboration between the BC Cancer Agency, Northern Health and the Canadian Cancer Society, along with researchers at the University of British Columbia and Athabasca University.
- The Harmonization Project, which includes the *Stop Smoking Before Surgery* initiative, received \$928,000 from the Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute and the program is expected to run until 2016.
- [www.harmonization.ok.ubc.ca](http://www.harmonization.ok.ubc.ca)

**Quotes:****Terry Lake, Health Minister**

“Quitting smoking before surgery can improve recovery rates and has been shown to lead to better surgery outcomes. If patients take the time before surgery to quit, they are making great steps towards improving their overall health and reducing time spent in the hospital.”

**El Taylor, Northern Administrator for the BC Cancer Agency Prevention Programs**

“The BC Cancer Agency is committed to working with partners across the province to enhance the effectiveness of provincewide health care programs and services to decrease cancer incidence. Smoking rates are highest in northern BC, so the *Stop Smoking Before Surgery* program has the potential to make a significant impact in improving recovery from surgery as well as decreasing lung cancer incidence further down the road.”

**Nadine Caron, General Surgeon, University Hospital of Northern BC**

“Many people quit smoking due to concerns about cancer and their overall health. They may be concerned about the harmful effects of smoking, or may already be suffering from tobacco-related illnesses, but what they may not know is that there are significant immediate health benefits for quitting prior to surgery, which may provide some additional motivation to quit now.”

**Nancy Viney, Northern Health Population Health Tobacco Reduction**

“Statistics show that tobacco use is higher in northern B.C. compared to the rest of the province. It is Northern Health’s hope that programs such as the Stop Smoking Before Surgery will help to reduce tobacco use within northern B.C., therefore improving health outcomes.”

**Suzanne Gaby, Manager of QuitNow**

“The new *Stop Smoking Before Surgery* resources, integrated into QuitNow’s website, can provide extra encouragement to quit for patients who are scheduled for surgery. They will find a wide range of online tools, text/email support or one-on-one phone coaching at their finger tips.”

***The BC Cancer Agency, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, is committed to reducing the incidence of cancer, reducing the mortality from cancer, and improving the quality of life of those living with cancer. It provides a comprehensive cancer control program for the people of British Columbia by working with community partners to deliver a range of oncology services, including prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment, research, education, supportive care, rehabilitation and palliative care. For more information, visit [www.bccancer.ca](http://www.bccancer.ca).***

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