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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health  
BC Ambulance Service

### **CPR PROGRAM LAUNCHED IN PRINCE GEORGE SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

PRINCE GEORGE – Students are getting a lesson in lifesaving thanks to a CPR program launched today in two area secondary schools.

The High School CPR Program is being brought to Prince George by the BC Ambulance Service (BCAS), the Advanced Coronary Treatment (ACT) Foundation, and Ambulance Paramedics of BC – CUPE 873 (APBC). Approximately 140 students from John McInnis Jr. Secondary School and 160 students from Prince George Secondary School will be trained in CPR by ten certified teachers each year.

“I want to encourage schools and teachers throughout B.C. to become involved in the program, which teaches students important life-saving skills such as how to react in an emergency and perform CPR until the paramedics arrive,” said Education Minister Shirley Bond. “The High School CPR Program also teaches students to live a healthy lifestyle to avoid developing cardiovascular disease.”

In April 2005, the BCAS, ACT Foundation and APBC launched a program whereby paramedic instructors train teachers to teach CPR to Grade 10 students. To date, 200 teachers in 40 schools throughout the province have taught CPR to approximately 9,000 Grade 10 students. The majority of teachers were trained by paramedics.

“It’s estimated that only 15 per cent of British Columbians know CPR,” said BCAS Vice-President of Medical Programs Dr. Jim Christenson. “Even with the best technology, medical expertise and timely deployment of first responders, the best chance for someone in cardiac arrest is still to have a bystander perform CPR until paramedics can provide professional CPR and defibrillation.”

Cardiovascular disease is the second leading cause of death and accounts for more than one fifth of all deaths in B.C. A cardiac arrest victim is four times more likely to survive if CPR is administered while waiting for further medical care.

“By volunteering their time in schools across B.C., paramedics will bring this life saving skill to as many students as possible, giving them the confidence to react during an emergency,” said APBC President John Strohmaier. “Our sincere hope is that by supporting young people to become well-versed in CPR we’ll witness more positive outcomes for the thousands of cardiac arrest patients we treat and transport each year.”

The opportunity to participate in the High School CPR Program will be expanded to other schools in the district and across the province, with the goal of establishing it in all B.C. secondary schools by 2010. BCAS, the ACT Foundation, and APBC – CUPE 873 are using CPR month in November to remind British Columbians of the importance of learning cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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