



Canadian Centre
on Substance Abuse

Centre canadien de lutte contre
l'alcoolisme et les toxicomanies

First-ever Canadian Standards for Youth Drug Prevention Initiatives Announced

OTTAWA, May 19, 2009 – The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) released today the first-ever Canadian Standards for school-based youth substance abuse prevention initiatives, *Building on Our Strengths: Canadian Standards for School-based Youth Substance Abuse Prevention—A Guide for Education and Health Personnel.*

Created as a resource for those in the field of education, public health or addictions prevention, the Standards can be applied across Canada, and within diverse populations. Their goal is to strengthen the effectiveness of school-centred youth substance abuse prevention and health promotion efforts by providing both a performance benchmark and a supportive guide to reference when pursuing improvements to prevention activities.

Substance abuse is an important issue in Canada. The estimated economic, health and social costs are \$40 billion with approximately \$8 billion attributed to illicit drug use. The problem is especially critical among youth aged 15 to 24 who account for 60% of all illicit drug users.

“We know that effective prevention initiatives can help reduce illicit drug use, improve overall health and reduce treatment costs down the road,” says Rhowena Martin, Director of Partnerships and Priorities at CCSA. “Through the development and adoption of the Standards we hope to increase the efficacy of our prevention efforts in Canada.”

CCSA developed the Standards in collaboration with the Canadian Standards Task Force (CSTF)— a group of experts in substance abuse prevention from across the country. The Standards are based on the most up-to-date research on effective school-based prevention practices and are organized into five phases, which reflect the continual nature of program development needed for prevention initiatives to progress and evolve.

“Canada now has a vital tool that will help workers develop and implement more effective initiatives that prevent drug use and its associated harms,” stated Art Steinmann, Canadian Standards Task Force Co-chair and prevention expert.



Background:

To encourage the uptake and application of the Canadian Standards within the prevention field, two databases were developed: the [Database of Prevention Resources](#) that provides sources of information to aid in the implementation of the Standards, and the [Database of Canadian Prevention Initiatives](#) for those looking for examples of programs that have been assessed against the Standards.

Building on Our Strengths: Canadian Standards for School-based Youth Substance Abuse Prevention—A Guide for Education and Health Personnel is one of many initiatives under [CCSA's Drug Prevention Strategy for Canada's Youth](#). The aim of this five-year national drug prevention initiative is to reduce illicit drug use by Canadian youth between 10 to 24 years of age. To accomplish this, CCSA is advancing the Strategy's three complementary approaches by building and sustaining the Media Youth Consortium, developing Canadian Standards for prevention programming, and developing sustainable partnerships. This initiative is part of the federal government's National Anti-Drug Strategy.

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About CCSA (www.ccsa.ca)

With a legislated mandate to reduce alcohol- and other drug-related harms, the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse provides leadership on national priorities, fosters knowledge-translation within the field, and creates sustainable partnerships that maximize collective efforts. CCSA receives funding support from Health Canada.

For further information, please contact

Louise Crandall, Communications Advisor, CCSA

Tel.: 613-235-4048, ext. 276

Email: lcrandall@ccsa.ca