



Attention: News/Assignment/Health and Lifestyle editors

Canadian Cancer Society announces new Health Canada-funded smoking cessation campaign aimed at young adults

Canadians invited to “break up” with tobacco for National Non-Smoking Week

Toronto, Ontario, January 16, 2012 –The Canadian Cancer Society has launched *Break It Off* – a new digital campaign funded by Health Canada to promote tobacco cessation. Led by the Society’s free cessation service – *Smokers’ Helpline* – the campaign is aimed at young adults, age 19-29, who have the highest smoking rate in the country.

“The Government of Canada is proud to support the Canadian Cancer Society in encouraging and enabling young adults to quit smoking,” said the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health. “Overall smoking rates have dropped significantly in recent years, but rates among young adults aged 20 to 24 remain well above the Canadian average. This is why Health Canada is supporting this important project, which will use the strength of social media to help reduce tobacco use among this priority demographic.”

The [Break It Off](#) campaign uses a “breakup” metaphor, comparing quitting smoking with ending a romantic relationship, in order to provide support and encourage young Canadians to “break up” with their smoking addiction. The campaign’s website, [BreakItOff.ca](#), guides the user through the challenging stages of ending an unhealthy tobacco relationship: getting it over with, staying split up and moving on with life.

The website is also a resource hub for users to learn about proven quit methods, such as phone counselling, patches, gums, and inhalers. It includes a quick link for smokers to connect with a *Smokers’ Helpline* Quit Coach, and is accompanied by fun, interactive social media features. Users can download a free mobile app for instant support when they are “stressed, angry, tipsy or bored.” They can see how many cigarettes have been “dumped” by their peers who have used *Break It Off*. Users can also upload a video of themselves “breaking up” with cigarettes (“a public break up can greatly increase your chances of dumping smoking for good.”) Videos will be collected on YouTube with the goal of creating “the world’s biggest break up” with smoking.

“We know that smoking can be an incredibly difficult addiction to quit, but it is easier with support,” adds Donna Czukar, Sr. Director, Support Programs, Canadian Cancer Society. “*Break It Off* provides a link to support from those closest to you through Facebook and YouTube, and immediate access to professional support from the Quit Coaches at *Smokers’ Helpline*.”

The site also has compelling information about the health effects of smoking, such as a list of highly toxic chemicals contained in cigarettes (“You’re dating more than just nicotine – the shameful secrets it didn’t want you to know”).

National Non-Smoking Week, which has been hosted by the Canadian Council for Tobacco Control (CCTC) for more than three decades, has announced that its theme for 2012 is “Breaking up is hard to do.” The CCTC compares tobacco addiction to a dependent

relationship and is encouraging Canadians to “kiss tobacco goodbye” this week, coinciding with the launch of the *Break It Off* campaign.

Canadians can join the *Break It Off* community at www.BreakItOff.ca.

About Canadian Cancer Society *Smokers’ Helpline*

Smokers’ Helpline is a free, confidential service that provides personalized support, advice and information about quitting smoking and tobacco use. Operated by the Canadian Cancer Society and available in six provinces and one territory, *Smokers’ Helpline* can be accessed at 1 877 513-5333 and SmokersHelpline.ca.

About the Canadian Cancer Society

The Canadian Cancer Society is a national community-based organization of volunteers whose mission is the eradication of cancer and the enhancement of the quality of life of people living with cancer. When you want to know more about cancer, visit www.cancer.ca or call the bilingual *Cancer Information Service*, toll-free, at 1 888 939-3333.

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