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### *Joint statement marshals forces to greening health care*

November 16, 2009

Ottawa — Twelve national organizations representing all areas of the health sector, joined by the David Suzuki Foundation, have produced a joint statement spelling out a new commitment to creating an environmentally responsible health sector. It is being released just prior to the Copenhagen Climate Summit in December to help raise environmental awareness and action.

"Obviously, there is a direct link between health and the environment and Canada's physicians are committed to following environmentally responsible practices as they care for patients," said Canadian Medical Association President Dr. Anne Doig.

In addition to setting out the vision and collaborative approach for achieving a greener health care system and processes, *Toward an Environmentally Responsible Canadian Health Sector* (see link) also includes three calls to action:

- That government at all levels understand and address links between health and the environment and incorporate these links into policy decisions through legislative and budgetary actions.
- That health care organizations pledge to minimize the negative impact of their activity on the environment and to seek solutions to existing barriers.
- That individuals working in the health care sector both model and advocate for environmentally responsible approaches to delivering health care without compromising patient safety and care.

"We congratulate Canada's health professionals for setting the agenda for an environmentally responsible health sector," said Peter Robinson, CEO of the David Suzuki Foundation. "Leadership from this sector is needed to put Canada on the path of sustainability and protect the environment upon which all life depends."

"Canada's nurses feel that the health sector must be a leader in promoting environmentally responsible practices," concluded Kaaren Neufeld, President of the Canadian Nurses Association. "We want to make greening the health sector a priority for all organizations and individuals involved in delivering health care services to Canadians."

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[Click here](#) for copies of the Joint Position Statement (PDF)

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND QUOTES ON "TOWARD AN ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE CANADIAN HEALTH SECTOR"

The joint statement was developed and approved by the following national health groups:

Association of Canadian Academic Healthcare Organizations;  
Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment;  
Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care;  
Canadian College of Health Service Executives;  
Canadian Dental Association;  
Canadian Healthcare Association;  
Canadian Healthcare Engineering Society;  
Canadian Medical Association;  
Canadian Nurses Association;  
Canadian Pharmacists Association;  
Canadian Public Health Association;

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David Suzuki Foundation;  
National Specialty Society for Community Medicine.

"As health leaders in today's world we have an obligation to demonstrate our commitment to environmental stewardship by reducing waste and our annual energy footprint. In doing so we improve the long term health of the communities we serve."

Ray J. Racette, MHA, CHE  
President & CEO, Canadian College of Health Service Executives

"This Joint Position Statement is an unprecedented show of commitment and support for the adoption of sustainable health care practices from Canada's major health service organizations and the Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care. Our members are proud to have played an active role in its development. The Statement further reinforces our decade-long commitment to working with a broad range of stakeholders to positively influence the ecological impact of the Canadian health care system."

Kent Waddington  
Communications Director and Founding Member  
Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care

"Environmental change threatens the health of human populations across our globe and thus behooves health organizations to be leaders in reducing our impact on the climate. Human health and environmental change will be major drivers of global decisions through this century, and Canada is positioned to model the necessary changes to our internationally acclaimed health care system to be global leaders in reducing our environmental impacts."

Matthew Hodge, MDCM, PhD, FRCPC  
President, National Specialty Society for Community Medicine

"The health sector in Canada must do its part in protecting the health and well-being of all Canadians by taking responsibility for its environmental foot-print. Delivering environmentally responsible health care is everyone's business."

Debra Lynkowski,  
Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Public Health Association

"The Canadian Dental Association is supportive of the call to action on the protection of the environment in the context of health care. We encourage change in consumption patterns and best practices of ecologic stewardship. After all, this stewardship is in the best interest of everyone's health."

Don Friedlander, BSc, DDS,  
President, Canadian Dental Association

"CAPE is delighted that the Call to Action urges health workers to be environmental advocates. With the world now striving to build a new climate change agreement, this advocacy is more important than ever."

Gideon Forman, Executive Director  
Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment

"Pharmaceuticals can have a detrimental effect on the environment if not disposed of properly. We look forward to working collaboratively to achieve a greener health sector."

Dwight Ball  
President, Canadian Pharmacists Association

"A healthy economy is created, sustained and grown by healthy Canadians. The Call to Action presented in this position statement encourage all Canadians to strive for a sustainable environmental future. A green health system will become a reality through the innovative actions of policy-makers, health professionals, system leaders, and all those who use the system. CHA members are pleased to be a part of this positive and forward-thinking vision for Canada's health system."

Pamela C. Fralick  
President and CEO, Canadian Healthcare Association

"Understanding the importance of environmental conservation and the benefits that can be achieved, ACAHO is very pleased to participate in the development of this joint position statement. In our view, one of the keys to advancing environmentally responsible practices is to continue to move forward with a combination of physical infrastructure renewal and best practices."

Glenn Brimacombe  
President and CEO  
Association of Canadian Academic Healthcare Organizations

"Members of the Canadian Healthcare Engineering Society have worked tirelessly throughout the past decade to blend environmentally sustainable health service delivery practices with day-to-day operations at hundreds of health care facilities across Canada. We are succeeding in lowering health care's ecological footprint and are proud to work in partnership with the most influential health care organizations in Canada to achieve that goal. Together we commit to creating the sustainable health service environment needed to preserve our natural environment for future generations."

Michael Hickey  
Canadian Healthcare Engineering Society

