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Forum to highlight links between alcohol and chronic disease

Toronto - March 21, 2007 - For the fourth year in a row, experts in the area of Substance Abuse Prevention will gather in Toronto to showcase and discuss emerging research in a forum co-sponsored by the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA). The theme of this year's *Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity* forum, to be held Thursday March 22, is "Alcohol and Chronic Disease".

Specialists from several respected agencies and organizations, including the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Cancer Care Ontario, and Parent Action on Drugs, will present on a number of topics related to alcohol and chronic disease. Pegeen Walsh, Director of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Ministry of Health Promotion, will discuss the government's initiatives in a session related to this timely issue.

"Alcohol consumption has been causally linked with over 60 chronic diseases and acute conditions, including several types of cancer, and the role of alcohol as a risk factor chronic disease deserves to be more widely acknowledged," said Dr. Norman Giesbrecht, Senior Scientist at CAMH, "There are also associations between high risk drinking and other risk factors for chronic disease, such as smoking, unhealthy eating, obesity and illicit drug use."

The forum, which is funded mainly by the Ministry of Health Promotion, is being sponsored by CAMH together with OPHA's Alcohol Policy Network and the Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance. "We're excited to be sponsoring this event," stated Dr. Garry Aslanyan, OPHA President. "This is a wonderful opportunity for researchers, policy makers and advocates to move beyond the problems with alcohol and chronic disease and really begin to focus on solutions."

The forum takes place Thursday March 22, 2007 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM at Harbourfront Community Centre, 627 Queen's Quay West, Toronto. For more information, see www.apolnet.ca.

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