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# New Eastern Ontario campaign encourages all parents to know more, do more for their kids' health

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OTTAWA, PETAWAWA and ROCKLAND, ON, March 27 /CNW Telbec/ - Today marks the start of an important new campaign in the Champlain Region of Ontario that will encourage parents to create more physical activity and healthy eating opportunities for their families - regardless of how healthy they think their children are. Parents are asked to Know More Do More in response to findings of a recent study by the Champlain Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Network (CCPN) that highlights a startling gap between parents' perceptions and reality when it comes to their children's physical activity levels and eating behaviours.

The Champlain Healthy School-aged Children Initiative Attitudinal Research Study assessed the eating and physical activity patterns of children aged 4 to 12 years and their families in the Champlain Region in 2007. The overall results paint a general picture that parents in this region believe their children have adequate physical activity levels, good eating habits, and are at about the right weight. However, data from Statistics Canada and other national sources clearly indicates that these results are not consistent with other measures of child activity, eating habits and weight. "We know that many children are not meeting the recommended guidelines for physical activity and healthy eating," said Dr. Mark Tremblay, Director of the Healthy Active Living & Obesity Research Group at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, a partner of the CCPN. "Parents' perceptions stand in contrast to the facts we know as a health community about the health behaviours of our children."

The study revealed some interesting findings. When asked about their child's weight, seven per cent of parents felt their child was overweight and almost no one (0.2 per cent) felt their child was obese. However, most recent data from the Canadian Health Measures Survey released in January 2010 concludes that 26 per cent of children aged 6 to 11 in Canada are overweight or obese, and that number rises to 28 per cent in

teens.(1) Furthermore, one-quarter of parents (25 per cent) report their child consumes two or less servings of fruits and vegetables daily. However, the 2009 Heart and Stroke Foundation's Report Card on Ontario's Kids reveals that only one in eight children (13 per cent) in Ontario is eating five or more servings of fruit and vegetables daily.(2) In terms of physical activity, about 90 per cent of parents considered their child to be 'active' or 'very active', while national figures tell us that 87 per cent of children and youth are in fact not meeting the recommended 90 minutes of physical activity a day.(3) "I had never really thought about whether I had an accurate view of my family's eating and physical activity habits, but now I'm going to follow this more closely and talk about it with others," said Andrea Tomkins, a popular parenting blogger and mother of two, whose family is one of the champion families participating in the launch events across the region today. "What I do know from my own experience is that integrating healthy lifestyle changes for my kids and my family is very doable and a lot of fun. This includes following tips like those in the Family Healthy Active Living jar - having a dance-off with your children after dinner or picking out a new recipe to try together."

As champion families, Andrea's family in Ottawa and Tracy Gorman's of Petawawa (Program Director for Bereaved Families of Ontario-Pembroke and Director with the Fallen Heroes Memorial Fund) will be undertaking a series of weekly healthy eating and active living activities based on tips from the tip jar available on the campaign website at [www.knowmore-domore.ca](http://www.knowmore-domore.ca). Parents in the region can do the same by downloading the tips from the website and making simple healthy changes to their own families' routines. Champlain families who register on the website have a chance to win a membership to a community centre, a family paddling course, or a water park experience.

"Parents play a pivotal influential role in the health of their children; we just need to understand there's something more we can do, regardless of how fit or healthy we believe our children to be," said Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, pediatrician and Medical Officer of Health, Eastern Ontario Health Unit, a partner of the CCPN. "Role modeling simple things for our kids can make a big difference in their long-term health."

About the Champlain Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Network As an alliance of 15 health and community partners from across the Champlain Region of Ontario, the CCPN is leading the implementation of a five-year cardiovascular disease prevention strategy with a goal to prevent 10,000 premature deaths from heart disease and stroke in the region by 2020.

The Champlain Region includes the City of Ottawa, the Eastern Counties of Prescott and Russell and Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, Renfrew County, and parts of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties. The Know More Do More campaign is part of the CCPN's Healthy School-aged Children Initiative, being led by several CCPN partners.

<< ----- (1) Tremblay M. Fitness of Canadian children and youth: Results from the 2007-2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey Statistics Canada Health Reports. January 2010. Cat no. 82-003-X (2) Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. (2009). Report Card on Canadian's Health: Is the Heart Health of Ontario's kids making the grade? (3) Active Healthy Kids Canada (2009). The Active Healthy Kids Canada Report on Physical Activity for Children and Youth >> /NOTE TO PHOTO EDITORS: A photo accompanying this release is available at <http://photos.newswire.ca>. Images are free to accredited members of the media/ -0- 03/27/2010 /For further information: Inquiries: Heather Chew, Blueprint Public Relations, (613) 237-7400, Ext. 21, cell: (613) 797-8626, [heather\(at\)blueprintpr.ca](mailto:heather@blueprintpr.ca)/ CO: Champlain Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Network (CCPN) ST: Ontario IN: SU: CHI -30- CNW 10:30e 27-MAR-10