

# Measuring Our Success

## Summary Document

**ActNow BC**

January, 2008

Every move is a good move.





# What is Measuring Our Success?

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In March 2005, Premier Gordon Campbell launched ActNow BC – a cross-government, multi-sectoral initiative to help make British Columbia the healthiest jurisdiction to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games. This comprehensive campaign promotes and supports increased physical activity, healthy eating, healthy choices in pregnancy and living tobacco free.

ActNow BC has clearly defined performance measures and has built evaluation plans into every facet of its activities. We base our work on programs and practices that work—this is referred to as “evidence-based decision making.” When we launch a program such as the BC Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, we do it based on previous research and the most current thinking available. That is, our programs are piloted, built carefully and comprehensively and measured every step of the way.

This document provides a brief overview of how ActNow BC is doing. A more detailed progress report can be found in “*Measuring Our Success – Progress Report 1*,” available at [www.actnowbc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.actnowbc.gov.bc.ca). A baseline document produced earlier is also available on this website.

## Is ActNow BC making a difference?

Each day, British Columbians make choices about their health. What they eat, what they buy, how they get to work and school, how much “screen time” they get, how they spend their leisure time, whether they smoke or drink are daily, even hourly, choices. These choices are supported by societal attitudes and made at home, school, in the workplace and community.

An important aspect to evaluating ActNow BC involves assessing whether and to what extent initiatives have been implemented and who is being reached or participating in which initiative. Numerous activities are being planned in schools, worksites and communities across the province—and are at different stages. Following are a sample of the initiatives from each of the targeted areas and a description of the progress that is being made in achieving the ActNowBC objectives.

*Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness*

**Goal #2 of the Five Great Goals for BC**

*Although still at an early point in implementing ActNow BC - it's important to monitor what's working.*

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*"I love to walk and it's been great to go out and walk with others and discover new and different walks. I even brought my friend along to support her getting more active."*

*– North Vancouver Resident, North Shore Walks community wide walking program*

*"Getting students fit, getting them doing things – it has helped with their learning, it has helped with their self esteem, it has helped with the whole climate in the school."*

*– Educator*

## **a. Physical Activity**

### **Active Communities**

[www.activecommunities.bc.ca](http://www.activecommunities.bc.ca)

The Active Communities Initiative mobilizes and supports local governments and partner organizations in promoting healthy lifestyles, increasing physical activity levels amongst British Columbians, and developing supportive community environments. The BC Recreation and Parks Association is implementing the initiative with funding from ActNow BC and in partnership with 2010 LegaciesNow.

As of June 30, 2007:

- there are 137 registered Active Communities,
- 54 Active Communities grants have been allocated,
- 581 Active Communities Tool Kits have been distributed and,
- 398 Active Workplace Workbooks have been downloaded from the website
- 12 Active Communities Community workshops and one provincial forum have been held.

### **Action Schools! BC**

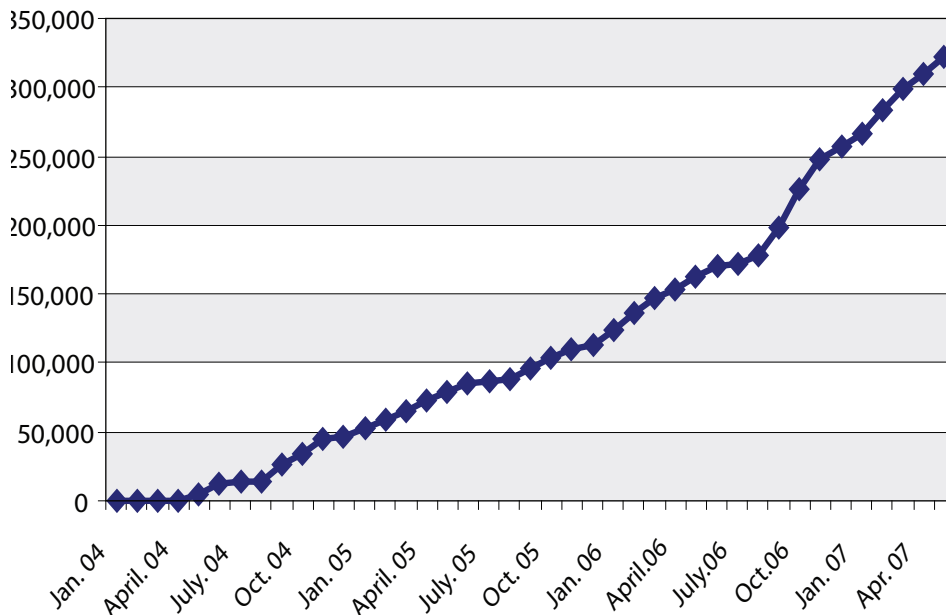
[www.actionschoolsbc.ca/content/home.asp](http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca/content/home.asp)

Action Schools! BC promotes the creation of inclusive and diverse physical activity opportunities throughout the school day. Students, school staff, families and community practitioners can contribute to and benefit from whole school based action plans that provide opportunities for children to be more physically active more often.

The following figure presents data between January 2004 and May 2007 on the increase in the number of schools that registered with Action Schools! BC. As of May 31, 2007 over 300,000 students attended the 1,308 schools registered in Action Schools!BC. 100% of school districts had at least one Action Schools! BC school in their districts.

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ber of Students In Schools Registered in Action Schools!BC, (January 2004 to May 2007)



## b. Healthy Eating

### BC School Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program (SFVSP)

[www.aitc.ca/bc/snacks](http://www.aitc.ca/bc/snacks)

School children in ten pilot elementary schools began in September 2005 receiving twice per week a free BC grown fruit or vegetable. This initiative is a partnership with the Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture and Lands and is delivered through the BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation. As well, teachers, students and their families receive information on BC grown fruits and vegetables. These ten pilot schools represent 3300 elementary school children who received approximately 6600 fruits and vegetables per week.

An evaluation of this initiative was completed in November 2006. Following are key findings of the evaluation:

- Children who were at risk (eating less than five fruit and vegetables per day at baseline) increased their consumption by 2 fruit and vegetable servings.

*“The kids will eat fruits and vegetables when they are accessible to them. If it is there, they will eat it. It is almost the norm now, or maybe even peer pressure to eat it because the other kids are eating them. It is important for the kids for their long term health. I feel pride that our school is involved in a program that is ground breaking and very promising.”*

– Teacher

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- Children and parents reported many positive personal and school level changes as a result of participating in the program. For example, 65% of children reported that they made positive changes including: eating more fruits and vegetables; feeling healthier; trying new fruits and vegetables; washing their hands more often; asking their parents to buy fruit and vegetables, and; knowing more about fruit and vegetables.
  - 100% of the teachers, administrators, and in-school coordinators who were interviewed were in favour of continuing with the program

As of September 2007, a total of 162 schools (elementary, middle and senior schools) throughout British Columbia are participating in the SFVSP.

## **Health Check™ BC Dining Pilot Program**

[www.healthcheck.org](http://www.healthcheck.org)

Health Check™ is an initiative intended to help British Columbians make healthy food choices in family dining establishments by incorporating BC foods on healthy menu items. This initiative occurs in partnership with the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Land and the BC Ministry of Health and is being pilot-tested in selected White Spot Restaurants in British Columbia.

A baseline survey of 450 patrons was conducted in five White Spot Restaurants in early 2007. Key results of the survey were:

- 81% of participants look for healthy food choices when ordering items in restaurants.
- 59% of participants indicated having seen the Health Check™ logo on food packaging.
- 61% of participants said they would be more likely to order an item if the Health Check™ logo was beside the item on the menu.
- 85% of participants indicated that White Spot's use of the Health Check™ logo would provide added value for them as a customer of the restaurant.
- 47% of participants said that they would use the availability of the Health Check™ program to help determine what restaurant they choose to visit next time they plan on eating out.

A follow-up survey and focus groups will be conducted approximately five months after the restaurant launch.

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## c. Tobacco Control

### QuitNow

[www.health.gov.bc.ca/tobctrl/cessation.html](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/tobctrl/cessation.html) or <http://bc.quitnet.com>

QuitNow Services are a set of smoking cessation services available to assist individuals quit smoking. They are available around the clock and are managed by the BC Lung Association. QuitNow Services are funded by the Ministry of Health and are available to all British Columbians.

QuitNow.ca is an internet-based cessation program. From January to December 2006, 5,364 persons who smoke registered with QuitNow.ca – a monthly average of 447. This is up from a year earlier when 3,498 persons who smoke registered with QuitNow.ca – a monthly average of 291.5.

QuitNow by phone - A toll-free 24/7 intervention and counseling service available in 130 languages and with Telecommunications Device for the Deaf. The purpose of the service is to encourage and assist tobacco users to quit or reduce their use of tobacco products. In 2006, 1,066 persons called QuitNow by phone, while 1,504 outbound calls were made by QuitNow by phone.

Approximately one in four (24%) British Columbia smokers reported that they were aware of QuitNow.ca, while approximately 13% were aware of QuitNow by phone.

*"I haven't felt this good in 27 years. I consider my lungs to be my new 'accessory'! The support I found at QuitNow got me through many a terrible craving."*

*– Ex-smoker*

### Municipal Smoking Bylaws

Most British Columbians agree or strongly agree (approximately 60%) that smoking in public places should not be tolerated.

The government recently announced province-wide smoke-free legislation in all indoor public places, with no allowances for Designated Smoking Rooms (DSRs) in restaurants and bars in 2008. BC is working toward consistent legislation that applies equally across the province to protect all workers and the public from hazards caused by exposure to second-hand smoke.

### Honouring Our Health

[www.honouringourhealth.ca/index.htm](http://www.honouringourhealth.ca/index.htm)

Honouring Our Health Challenge is a community-based program developed through the BC Aboriginal Tobacco Strategy that brings together best practices in health and the best Aboriginal traditions to promote the health and well-being of Aboriginal people and to prevent and stop tobacco misuse. The program provides train-the-trainer education and grants to help build capacity in Aboriginal communities to raise awareness of health and tobacco misuse through community level health promotion events.

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*This event provides excellent networking and skill building opportunities for anyone with a special interest in promoting healthy lifestyles.*

The October 2006 training event supported 214 front-line workers plus an additional 30 non-Aboriginal provincial/NGO representatives and 40 resource people to network and participate in a variety of skill-building activities. From January 2007 to March 2007, a total of 160 communities (151 grant recipients) participated in Honour Our Health activities. The activities were diverse (e.g. noon walk groups, traditional dance programs, self-care support circles, school-based health promotion challenges/presentations, etc), with organizations and schools engaging all age groups and focusing on one or more of the ActNow areas of focus. The Network and Celebration Event supported 240 community members to come together and share personal testimonies to lifestyle change (stories of quitting drinking alcohol, smoking or other substance abuse; stories of weight loss and control of blood pressure/blood sugar levels through regular exercise, etc.) and the commitment to maintaining these changes beyond the Honouring Our Health Challenge initiative.

## **d. Healthy Choices in Pregnancy (HCIP)**

*"I feel confident to use these skills with clients. Previously I felt unskilled and lacked confidence in discussing alcohol and substance use with child-bearing women. Thank you!"*

– Midwifery Student,  
Vancouver BC

*"This training has re-energized me and helped me to re-focus some of my skills when working with clients."*

– Public Health Nurse,  
Victoria, BC

### **Health Authority FASD Prevention Plans**

FASD Prevention Plans were developed by the five regional HAs. The Plans include working with relevant community partners

HCIP funds enhanced services by increasing staffing for perinatal programs for pregnant women from immigrant, refugee and Aboriginal communities. These programs increased community nutritionist services and food voucher funding to support vulnerable pregnant women.

### **Service Provider Awareness and Education**

The Provincial Health Services Authority has engaged in partnerships with the health authorities, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Public Health Agency of Canada, BC Association of Pregnancy Outreach Programs, and the BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health to develop a Provincial education plan addressing best practices for counseling women on the use of alcohol in pregnancy. Tobacco use in pregnancy is included in the education sessions. The education delivery plan targets perinatal service providers including: physicians, midwives, addiction workers, public health nurses, and pregnancy outreach program staff.

As of April 2007, 1600 service providers including physicians, midwives, public health nurses, Pregnancy Outreach Program (POPS) staff and mental health and addictions staff have received training. The Ministry of Children and Family Development, John Howard Society, Aboriginal services, tobacco reduction and youth serving agencies have also attended sessions.

# ActNow BC - Next Steps

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ActNow BC is built on a foundation that is consistent with the research evidence:

- It has clearly defined goals of helping B.C. become “the healthiest jurisdiction to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games”, and “Leading the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness”.
- It was launched from the most senior levels of government and has at its helm a Minister of State for ActNow BC who champions the goals of ActNow BC.
- It embraces a stewardship model that fosters inter-sectoral collaboration across government and among government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.
- It involves a broad frame of reference that includes schools, worksites, and communities and is aimed at providing environmental supports as well as enhancing individuals’ capacities to improve health.
- It has a performance monitoring and evaluation process that provides a means by which information on can be used to direct action.

There are a tremendous number of ActNow BC related activities that are occurring in schools, worksites and communities across British Columbia. The number of schools registered as ActionSchools! BC increases monthly, healthy public policies are being put in place in communities to affect tobacco use, and educational programs are being offered to health care providers to teach them ways to interact with their patients on ways to prevent alcohol use during pregnancy. Although many of these initiatives are still at pilot or prototype stages, they are beginning to gather momentum as more people become aware of ActNow BC and begin to understand its significance. Therefore at this early stage in the implementation of ActNow BC uptake of programs and services appears to be very positive.

Changing human behaviour is complex and the societal forces that aim to maintain the status quo are profound. To bring about changes in health behaviours will require the application of evidence-based actions that are sustained over a number of years. The success that now occurs in reducing tobacco rates to all time lows is a product of this long-term commitment. Lessons learned from successes achieved in reducing tobacco use can now be applied to other areas and at the same time innovative strategies need to be continued in further reducing the use of tobacco in our province.

In conclusion, the vision behind ActNow BC is the right one and the initiatives expected to flow from this vision are necessary and worthwhile if BC is to achieve a healthier population prepared for the social, demographic, economic and environmental dynamics of the 21st century.

*We are all part of the solution.*

*Accepting the Olympic analogy, this is a marathon, not a sprint.*

