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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport

### **PROVINCE BOOSTS FUNDING FOR ABORIGINAL ACTNOW**

VANCOUVER – The Province is almost doubling funding for the Honour Your Health Challenge to \$1.4 million this year, supporting Aboriginal leaders to establish and lead healthy living initiatives in their communities, announced Mary Polak, Minister of Healthy Living and Sport.

“We’re committed to improving the health of Aboriginal British Columbians and this Aboriginal ActNow program is already having a tremendously positive impact,” said Polak. “These dedicated individuals are leading significant change and we’re pleased to further support their great work.”

Honour Your Health sees more than 350 Aboriginal representatives from First Nations communities and urban Aboriginal organizations gathered in Vancouver for the provincial training event, where participants learn about nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco cessation. They then take that knowledge home and use the training to launch healthy living programs suited to their individual communities.

“I’ve seen such positive changes in people in my community since we’ve started the program,” said Gary Benson, a Gitanyow First Nation Honour Your Health Challenge leader. “More people than ever before are walking and biking on a daily basis and what makes me so proud is the example we’re setting for the children.”

“I’m privileged to see the complete lifestyle changes of people in our Sacred Breath ‘stop smoking’ group,” said Michelle Laboucan from Kelowna. “I’m thrilled to see many of our members’ families and friends have quit smoking too.”

The Vancouver Sun Run, Canada’s largest 10-km race, has become a focus for Honour Your Health participants, improving their levels of fitness so they can successfully take part. For the third year in a row, the program is partnering with SportmedBC to train individuals, groups and communities to prepare for the run. Last year, the Honour Your Health Challenge team was the largest contingent in the race, with 800 runners crossing the finish line in fifth place overall.

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