



## **SIX HUNDRED ABORIGINAL DIABETES PROGRAMS AT RISK ACROSS CANADA**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Toronto, ON (February 25, 2010) – The federal government must renew funding for the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI) in next week's budget or more than 600 programs for Aboriginal Canadians living with diabetes are at risk of being shut down, according to the Canadian Diabetes Association and the National Aboriginal Diabetes Association (NADA).

“The federal government has made a commitment to Canada's Aboriginal People living with diabetes, and they must not waiver in this commitment,” said Ellen Malcolmson, President and CEO, Canadian Diabetes Association. “The funding for the ADI sunsets at the end of March, and without this funding many of these community programs will simply not have the resources they need to continue operating.”

The spread of diabetes has reached epidemic proportions in Canada's Aboriginal communities. The statistics are sobering:

- 20 per cent of the Aboriginal population lives with diabetes;
- Across Canada, the prevalence of type 2 diabetes is 3 to 5 times higher in Aboriginal communities; and,
- Aboriginal People living with diabetes have higher rates of heart disease, kidney disease, blindness, amputations and infectious disease.

“Aboriginal Canadians simply do not have the same kind of easy access to physicians, specialists and hospitals that most other Canadians do,” said Dina Bruyere, Executive Director, National Aboriginal Diabetes Association. “ADI provides support to those living with diabetes that they simply can not get anywhere else. Failure to properly fund diabetes initiatives will lead to dire consequences for the health of Aboriginal Canadians living with diabetes.”

Recent studies presented at the World Diabetes Congress held in Montreal show the critical need for diabetes programs on reserves in Canada. The reports show that Aboriginal Canadians face a disproportionate burden of type 2 diabetes and an alarming rate of its serious complications, including kidney disease, nerve damage, vision loss, and amputations – all at higher rates than the general Canadian population. Equally alarming is the increasing rates of diabetes among Aboriginal women of child-bearing age which now approaching 20 per cent.

“The ADI is a critical component of the fight against diabetes in Canada, and any commitment to fighting this disease starts with support for the ADI,” said Ms. Malcolmson.

About the Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI)

The ADI was established with the aim of reducing the incidence and prevalence of diabetes among Aboriginal people and to improve the health status of First Nations and Inuit individuals, families and communities. The ADI currently delivers a range of primary prevention, screening and treatment programs and services to more than 600 communities throughout Canada in



partnership with Tribal Councils, First Nations organizations, Inuit community groups and Provincial and Territorial governments.

Through these activities, the ADI supports a range of health promotion and prevention, screening and treatment services that are community-based and culturally appropriate. ADI consists of the following components:

- Primary Prevention and Health Promotion
- Screening and Treatment
- Capacity Building and Training
- Research, Surveillance, Evaluation, Monitoring

#### About the Canadian Diabetes Association

Across the country, the Canadian Diabetes Association is leading the fight against diabetes by helping people with diabetes live healthy lives while we work to find a cure. We are supported in our efforts by a community-based network of volunteers, employees, healthcare professionals, researchers and partners. By providing education and services, advocating on behalf of people with diabetes, supporting research and translating research into practical applications - we are delivering on our mission. For more information, please visit [diabetes.ca](http://diabetes.ca) or call 1-800-BANTING (226-8464).

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For more information, please contact:

Jeremy Brace  
Canadian Diabetes Association  
416-671-2155  
[jeremy.brace@diabetes.ca](mailto:jeremy.brace@diabetes.ca)