



*For immediate release*

## **Press Release**

### **Asthma and COPD sufferers get professional help to manage their respiratory ailments**

**Ottawa, November 24, 2014** - The Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists (CSRT) commends Medavie Blue Cross for taking an active step towards patient centered care with practical health promotion strategies.

In a recent announcement, Medavie Blue Cross has confirmed that patients diagnosed with asthma and/or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) will be linked to services and supports that allow them to seek advice and guidance to effectively manage their symptoms from registered respiratory therapists (RRTs), and other health professionals, who have a Certified Respiratory Educator (CRE) or Certified Asthma Educator (CAE) credential. As experts in managing respiratory illness, RRTs have the knowledge and expertise in chronic respiratory disease education and can offer the best possible guidance to individuals living with chronic respiratory disease.

*“Medavie Blue Cross has shown great leadership in recognizing the value of respiratory educators in helping individuals who suffer from asthma and/or COPD”* stated Jessie Cox, CSRT President. *“There is no question that having such a proactive approach to the management of chronic respiratory disease will result in a higher quality of life for the individual but also to substantial savings to the health care system”* added Mrs. Cox.

The active participation of asthma and/or COPD sufferers in the management of their conditions reduces the burden of the disease. Self-management of asthma and/or COPD includes knowledge of coping behaviours, compliance with inhaled medication schedules and techniques, ability to recognize changes in the severity of the disease and self-adjustment of the medication in case of exacerbation. Education by respiratory therapists will provide sufferers with a better understanding of their disease process and will enhance their ability to manage and control their symptoms. This should result in a reduction in exacerbation frequency and severity.

The CSRT plays an important role in facilitating the registration of its members who provide services in our communities – respiratory therapists must have the RRT credential as well as a CRE / CAE credential and professional liability insurance. The CSRT is also implementing a research initiative to monitor the impact of increasing education opportunities on outcomes for patients who suffer from chronic respiratory disease and on the health care system.

The Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists provides national leadership through advocacy, service and unity to respiratory therapists across Canada. Established in 1964, the CSRT is the national professional association that represents over 3600 respiratory therapists across Canada and promotes exemplary standards of practice, conduct and performance in the provision of respiratory care.

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