



UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA  
HEART INSTITUTE  
INSTITUT DE CARDIOLOGIE  
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA

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## University of Ottawa Heart Institute Develops Personal Prevention Plan for Franco-Ontarians

### Heart Institute Provides Training for a New Model of Disease Prevention

**OTTAWA - October 23, 2008** – The University of Ottawa Heart Institute (UOHI) has launched a personal preventive counselling program to teach francophones in Eastern Ontario how to change their lifestyle habits and reduce their risk of heart disease.

The program, which targets an estimated 215,000 francophones living in and around Ottawa, is a Heart Institute model for heart disease prevention in francophone communities throughout Ontario.

To join the program, patients must be referred by their family physician if they are being treated for or are at risk of coronary artery disease (CAD). The prevalence of risk factors associated with CAD is somewhat higher among francophones than anglophones. These risk factors include family history, high blood pressure, diabetes, smoking and obesity.

Participants in the Heart Institute program are assessed for coronary risks such as smoking, diet, exercise and high cholesterol. After a heart health profile is created, a mentor either at the Heart Institute or within the local community constructs a personal plan for the participant, addressing strategies such as weight reduction, nutrition, stress management and exercise. Participants are telephoned once a week to monitor progress and provide any necessary information and support.

“This is the only service of its type anywhere in the country that offers primary and secondary prevention, and it is available at no cost,” said Dr. Michele de Margerie, Minto Prevention and Rehabilitation Centre, UOHI. “Our team at the Heart Institute knows by experience that when people change their lifestyles, they can change their lives. We can teach the benefits of exercise, eating well and looking after important cardiovascular markers such as high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol.”

Bernard L'Abbé, Director, East Ottawa Community Health Care Team, said: “The Heart Institute offers a wonderful program that is providing great outcomes for our community. A large red flag was brought to our attention, and now we can teach our patients how to manage their health to live longer and stronger than ever before.”

The program is supported by the Champlain Local Integration Health Network. Under the program, francophone mentors at the Heart Institute and in the surrounding communities of the Champlain District are trained to counsel Franco-Ontarians using successful strategies developed at the Heart Institute for patients and their families. An estimated

18 per cent of the population in the Ottawa region is francophone. The proportion climbs significantly in the counties east of Ottawa where, for example, 68 per cent of people in the County of Prescott Russell are francophone.

The Heart Institute manages the largest integrated cardiovascular rehabilitation program in Canada. An estimated 1,500 patients each year are registered in programs, which include medically supervised fitness instruction, nutrition programs, smoking cessation, stress management and vocational counselling.

### **About UOHI**

The University of Ottawa Heart Institute is Canada's largest and foremost cardiovascular health centre dedicated to understanding, treating and preventing heart disease. We deliver high-tech care with a personal touch, shape the way cardiovascular medicine is practiced, and revolutionize cardiac treatment and understanding. We build knowledge through research and translate discoveries into advanced care. We serve the local, national and international community, and are pioneering a new era in heart health. For more information, visit [www.ottawaheart.ca](http://www.ottawaheart.ca)

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