



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | POUR PUBLICATION IMMÉDIATE

Want a New Year's Personalized Plan for a Healthy Heart?

University of Ottawa Heart Institute Recruits Family Members of Former Patients To Study Risk Reduction

OTTAWA – January 29, 2007 – If your New Year's resolution involves good health and staying fit, the University of Ottawa Heart Institute might just be the place to visit. Family members of former patients at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute are invited to join a free intensive year-long Family Heart Health study, which tests a program to help reduce their cardiovascular risks. Participants – only one per family – will be screened for coronary risks such as smoking, diet, exercise and high cholesterol. After a heart health profile is created, participants will get assigned to one of two groups at the Heart Institute: a Family Heart Health group, or a Usual Care group. For the Family Heart Health group, an adviser will construct a 12-week personalized plan that could include weight reduction, improved nutrition, smoking cessation, an exercise routine, and, if necessary, a drug regimen in collaboration with the family physician.

“A family history of heart disease usually means an increased risk for developing heart disease yourself. So the Heart Institute is launching a new research project to examine how a personalized plan would effectively reduce risks for cardiovascular disease among spouses, siblings and offspring of former patients here,” said Robert Reid, PhD, Associate Director, UOHI Minto Prevention and Rehabilitation Centre.

A total of 450 participants are needed for the project. They will each get a basic assessment that includes a complete medical history; an evaluation about nutrition, exercise and smoking, for example, and a health profile involving components such as blood pressure and waist circumference. The study will track all participants for a one-year period, from their time of enrolment. Both groups will be reassessed at 12 weeks and 52 weeks.

Participants in the Family Heart Health Group get a personalized plan with weekly coaching sessions and counselling. Smoking, dietary changes, exercise and medication use, for instance, will be measured and monitored throughout the study. The Usual Care group will receive heart health information but not any further intervention. If any risk factors such as high blood pressure or elevated cholesterol levels are found, participants will receive the results in a letter for their family physician.

Coronary heart disease, a leading cause of death in Canada, is related to the presence of several well-known risk factors including family history. Changes in lifestyle and other risks have helped lower death rates from heart disease over the last few decades. Now the rate of decline might be slowing. The Heart Institute research team is developing new approaches to step up prevention and to ease heavy demands on Canada's health care system.

“Researchers at the Heart Institute found in an earlier study that 23% of family members were at a predicted risk for future coronary artery disease. We also learned that close family shows a very high willingness to change habits and lifestyle in areas such as smoking and physical activity compared to the rest of the population,” said Reid.

If your brother, sister, spouse or parent has been treated at the Heart Institute in the past five years, you may be eligible to participate in this project. To learn more, call 613-798-5555, Extension 17341.

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

For further information please contact:

Marlene Orton
Senior Manager, Public Affairs
University of Ottawa Heart Institute
(613) 761-4427
morton@ottawaheart.ca