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Major Women's Health Program Adapts National Quit-Smoking Model University of Ottawa Heart Institute Model Helps Push Quit-Smoking Rate to 50%

OTTAWA – June 6, 2007 – The University of Ottawa Heart Institute (UOHI)'s highly effective quit-smoking system, which is quickly being adopted as a national model, will be integrated for the first time into a major women's health program.

The model developed by the Heart Institute results in close to 50% of participants remaining smoke-free at 12 months. UOHI's Ottawa Model is a hospital-based program involving an exceptional combination of personal consult and intervention, information, follow-up and feedback.

The Shirley E. Greenberg Women's Health Centre, a comprehensive research, diagnostic and treatment facility for women in Ottawa, is implementing the Heart Institute's stop-smoking protocol as part of its program to promote good health and the overall well-being of women.

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women in North America. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death among women. Research shows that women who smoke are at greater risk for other diseases such as cervical cancer but they have a more difficult time quitting smoking. Women have distinctive smoking patterns that include strong social interaction, and their smoking behaviours differ from men. Research shows that women who smoke tend to have more concerns about weight gain and some experience withdrawal related to menstrual cycle phase.

"This program provides the Heart Institute with a unique opportunity to target 25,000 women who are referred to a centre dedicated to their specific health needs," said Bonnie Quinlan, Advanced Practice Nurse in Smoking Cessation and Tobacco Addiction Counselor, UOHI. "Our own patients who have successfully quit have gone on to enjoy healthier longer lives. We know that women respond especially well to individual counseling and support provided by our model to successfully quit smoking."

Dr. Elaine Jolly, Medical Director, Women's Health Centre, said: "The Ottawa Model is an innovative approach that will have an enormous impact on our ability to help our patients develop and enhance their personal and physical well-being. The Heart Institute's Smoking Cessation program provides our centre with an exceptional tool for women who smoke and want to take this most significant step to improve their health. We are thrilled to be part of this venture."

The Heart Institute's Smoking Cessation model is receiving national recognition as an efficient but highly personal approach to help patients quit smoking. More than 35 hospitals across the country have implemented UOHI's Ottawa Model. These include hospitals within River Valley Health in New Brunswick, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) in British Columbia and 12 regional hospitals outside of Ottawa in Eastern Ontario. Health officials in Toronto are currently in discussions with the Heart Institute to replicate the program.

Each year about 1,500 in-patient smokers at UOHI are identified and more than 98% participate in the Heart Institute's program. Among patients, 50% are smoke-free after six months and 46% do not smoke after one year.

About the Women's Health Centre

Part of The Ottawa Hospital, the Shirley E. Greenberg Women's Health Centre (SEGWHC) was established to advance women's health during reproductive, menopausal and postmenopausal years through special clinics in gynecological cancer, menopause and benign gynecology. The centre, which opened January 2005, employs advanced technology and a multidisciplinary team of specialists in women's medicine, registered more than 31,000 patient visits last year. To learn more, see www.owhc.ca

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

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Women and Smoking

- Women who smoke have double the risk of developing cervical cancer. Tobacco-related byproducts have been found in the cervix of women who smoke. Researchers believe these substances damage the DNA of cells.
- Smoking has been implicated in problems related to reproduction from increased risk of infertility to premature birth. Research shows that cigarette smoking combined with the use of oral contraceptives also increases the risk of heart attack or stroke. A risk of clotting associated with hormone therapies is shown to increase in women who smoke.
- Changes in mood and withdrawal from smoking vary with menstrual cycle phase in some women. Research has suggested that women who smoke may suffer greater withdrawal during the last two weeks of their cycles versus the first two weeks.
- Research has suggested that women's smoking habits are more strongly reinforced by factors such as social interaction and personal stressors. Consequently, some evidence suggests that nicotine replacement is less effective for women than men.
- Weight gain is a strong barrier for women wanting to quit smoking. Women are more at risk of weight gain. Some research has shown greater quit-smoking success for women enrolled in both a smoking cessation program and supervised weekly exercise programs. They increased cardiovascular health and gained less weight. The Ottawa Model offers individual counseling with strategies on how to manage weight.

The Ottawa Model at the Women's Health Centre

UOHI's Ottawa Model systematically identifies smokers and offers assistance to quit. The Women's Health Centre will adapt the Ottawa Model to achieve the following:

- All physicians and nurses will be provided with one-on-one training in how to manage tobacco dependency.
- All smokers admitted to the centre will be identified and treated with support from a designated nurse counselor and stop-smoking aids. Smoking status will be documented in the patient's record.
- The attending physician or nurse will advise all smokers to quit using an unambiguous but non-judgmental approach. An order for nicotine replacement therapy would be provided if necessary.

- A quit plan will be developed with smoking patients ready to quit. Nurse counselors would be trained to talk about nicotine dependence and smoking cessation.
- Patients are contacted at home via a sophisticated integrated voice response technology that tracks their progress using a detailed series of questions. If any response suggests the patient is having trouble remaining smoke-free or if they've started smoking again, a nurse counselor will call to talk about options and help get the patient back on track.