



Government of Yukon

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FOR RELEASE #11-156
November 16, 2011



Yukon recognizes World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day

WHITEHORSE—If you can't catch your breath, you're not necessarily out of shape.

For the first time, Yukon will be joining the world community in recognizing World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Day, which is taking place today.

COPD Day is organized by the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease and was launched in 2002 to raise awareness of a debilitating group of lung diseases, including chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

"COPD is hard to detect, especially in the early stages," Health and Social Services Minister Doug Graham said. "If a patient is out of breath, the assumption is often that they are just out of shape or it's because they smoke, but it could be COPD."

In 2004, 64 million people were affected with COPD and the World Health Organization predicts that COPD will become the third leading cause of death worldwide by 2030.

In Yukon, almost 700 people received care for COPD in the last year.

The Chronic Conditions Support Program of Health and Social Services is encouraging Yukoners who often find themselves out of breath to call their health provider for a breathing assessment called a spirometry test.

In addition, the department's Health Promotion Unit, in partnership with Community Nursing, will be sending a registered nurse to all communities outside Whitehorse to offer spirometry testing. The visits are funded through the Public Health Agency of Canada as part of Health Promotion's Lung Health Project.

The community visits will start November 16 and go into the new year. Yukoners interested in being referred for a spirometry test should contact their local health provider.

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