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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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Western Premiers' Conference

### **PREMIERS PROMOTE HEALTHY LIVING**

**VANCOUVER** – Western Premiers agreed today to support the next phase of the Own The Podium program as an opportunity to build on the outstanding success by Canada's athletes at the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Provincial and territorial leaders at the Western Premiers' Conference highlighted the success of the Own The Podium program in assisting Canada's athletes but also as a motivator for Canadians of all ages to get active.

Western Premiers acknowledged active living and healthy lifestyles as an effective way to reduce burdens on our health care systems. For example, premiers called on the federal government to work with provinces and territories to reduce average sodium intake to 1,600 mg per day by 2016 to improve the health of Canadians.

Canadians consume more than twice the recommended intake of sodium for adults. Excess sodium is linked to 30 per cent of high blood pressure cases in Canada. Reducing sodium could prevent up to 23,500 cardiovascular events each year, and could generate billions of dollars in direct and indirect health care savings.

### **Pharmaceuticals**

Western Premiers will continue to press for a purchasing plan for common pharmaceuticals. A recently signed memorandum of understanding on pharmaceutical pricing and purchasing strategy will allow millions of dollars of savings to be directed toward patient care.

Western Premiers will also take steps to achieve savings through collaboration on bulk purchasing of health care supplies as well. It's estimated that bulk purchasing could lead to savings of millions of dollars annually. For every \$10 million saved provinces and territories could fund:

- 730 hip replacement surgeries, or;
- 400 open heart surgeries, or;
- 100 registered nurses' salaries and benefits, or;
- 10 MRI machines.

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