

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**National Survey Reveals Many Canadians Unaware of Links
Between High Blood Pressure and Dementia, Other Serious Conditions**

Hypertension Canada Urges Canadians to “Know Your Numbers” this World Hypertension Day

Markham, Ontario – May 11, 2015 – Long known as a risk factor for heart disease, stroke and kidney disease, a recent national survey indicates that two-thirds of Canadians are unaware that high blood pressure, or hypertension, may also be linked to dementia. Despite the long list of potential complications, the survey also found that 49 per cent of Canadians say they are doing nothing to control their blood pressure. Leading to World Hypertension Day on May 17, Hypertension Canada encourages Canadians to take an easy first step and get their blood pressure checked.

“Many Canadians tend not to realize that hypertension has no symptoms, so that they are doing nothing about it is concerning, but not surprising,” says Dr. Ernesto Schiffrin, president of Hypertension Canada. “It is called the ‘Silent Killer’ for this reason. Even if you have hypertension, you generally feel well, so blood pressure measurement is essential for detection.”

High blood pressure is one of several conditions known to increase the risk of cardiovascular disease, that also increase the risk of developing vascular dementia. “With hypertension, the pressure in your blood vessels remains elevated, causing damage over time throughout your vascular system,” Dr. Schiffrin explains. “High blood pressure is a risk factor for many diseases, and it is controllable.”

A top risk factor for death and lost years of healthy life, over 90% of Canadians will develop hypertension in their lifetimes. Hypertension affects 7.5 million Canadians and of those, 17% don’t even know they have it, while 35% do not have their blood pressure under control.

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Both prevention and control strategies include getting enough exercise and ensuring a diet rich in vegetables and low in sodium. With such motivation, what's behind the lack of action? "Respondents cited a number of barriers, like finding time for exercise, eating a healthy diet with limited time to cook and not knowing enough about hypertension," says Angelique Berg, CEO. "The best first step is blood pressure measurement."

Blood pressure kiosks are widely available in pharmacies across the country, and are proving in studies to be more accurate than measurements taken in physician offices. Hypertension Canada's 2015 recommendations for the prevention and treatment of hypertension now include an out-of-office blood pressure reading to establish a firm diagnosis.

"All Canadians should check their blood pressure annually, and more often if they have hypertension," says Dr. Schiffrin. "World Hypertension Day serves as a reminder to check your blood pressure and is an easy first step in disease prevention."

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Related Events:

Vascular Health Day at Queens Park in Toronto – 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. on Mon., May 11, 2015

Lighting of Niagara Falls - 10:00 p.m. on Sat., May 16, 2015, courtesy Niagara Falls Illumination Board

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About Hypertension Canada

Hypertension Canada is the nation's publisher of the clinical recommendations for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of hypertension. A registered charity, Hypertension Canada is solely dedicated to the prevention and control of hypertension and its complications. For more information, please visit www.hypertension.ca/whd2015.

About the Survey

This study was conducted on behalf of Hypertension Canada by Northstar, a globally integrated strategic insights consulting firm, among 1,000 Canadian adults aged 18 and older. Surveys were completed between March 27 and April 6, 2015. Sampling quotas were used to ensure the sample is representative of Canadians in terms of age, gender, region and prevalence of hypertension. Assuming a probability sample, the margin of error would be +/-3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. This survey was made possible with an unrestricted grant from Servier Canada.

About Servier Canada

The Servier Research Group is an independent pharmaceutical group, with more than 22,000 employees, including 3,000 in R&D, around the world and is present in over 140 countries. Organized as a foundation and deeply committed to research, it reinvests a large portion of its sales in the research and development of innovative medications. For more information, please visit www.servier.ca.

About Northstar

NORTHSTAR is a strategic marketing insights and consulting firm that aligns leading edge, customized research techniques and cultural context with proprietary and proven strategic marketing frameworks and models to drive insights to impact. Northstar's suite of services relate to the most critical elements of brand, customer and marketing strategy, with sector expertise in not-for-profit, retail, travel and tourism, automotive, CPG, food & beverage, financial services, pharma / health care, transportation and fashion / luxury. For more information, please go to www.northstarhub.com.

About World Hypertension Day

World Hypertension Day is a health promotion day, led by Hypertension Canada and recognized by Health Canada, to promote the importance of hypertension prevention and control to stem the chronic and deadly diseases it often precedes. It was established in 2005 by the World Hypertension League. Hypertension Canada gratefully acknowledges Zona Health as its World Hypertension Day 2015 sponsor. For more information visit www.zonahealth.ca.