

Raising Awareness About Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

(THUNDER BAY, ON, November 16, 2011) Today, St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG) hosted a "Walk and Talk" in recognition of World COPD Day. COPD is a common lung disease that blocks the airways, making breathing difficult. The goal of the event is to raise awareness about COPD in the community.

Guest speaker at the event Dr. Birubi Biman, Respiriologist, SJCG, says "The early stages of COPD often go unrecognized. Symptoms of COPD include coughing, bringing up phlegm or mucus, and getting short of breath. A simple, painless test called spirometry can help diagnose the disease. When COPD is diagnosed early, treatment can prevent further deterioration of lung function."

Effective treatments are available to help people diagnosed with COPD breathe easier and live more active lives. St. Joseph's Care Group's Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program is designed to help improve the health and quality of life for people who are affected by moderate or severe Chronic Lung Diseases such as COPD. Through education and exercise the goal of this 8-week outpatient program is to:

- enhance quality of life
- reduce the intensity of shortness of breath
- improve ability to perform daily activities
- provide social and emotional support
- prevent and/or reduce hospital admissions and physician visits
- improve self-confidence and self-reliance in managing lung disease and symptoms

SJCG also offers a COPD Education Clinic. The Clinic is an individualized approach for people diagnosed with COPD that teaches them about the disease and techniques to self-manage their condition. Clients of the COPD Education Clinic require less intense programming than the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program and can participate as needed or when their schedules allow.

According to the Lung Association of Ontario, over 750,000 people in Canada suffer from COPD. Tracy Buckler, President & CEO, SJCG, says "St. Joseph's Care Group provides clients with COPD the necessary skills and supports required to effectively manage the disease to improve quality of life and reduce hospitalizations."

According to the World Health Organization, COPD afflicts some 50 million people around the world, and kills nearly 3 million every year. In addition, COPD is greatly under-diagnosed, with recent studies indicating that 25% to 50% of people with clinically significant COPD don't know they have the disease. For more information about COPD services available from St. Joseph's Care Group, please contact Shelley Prevost at 343-2412.

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*St. Joseph's Care Group is accredited with Accreditation Canada and provides services in
Complex Care & Physical Rehabilitation, Mental Health & Addictions, and, Long-Term Care.*

*St. Joseph's Care Group has approximately 1700 employees and over 400 volunteers. With an annual operating budget over \$125M,
SJCG is the fifth largest employer in Thunder Bay. To learn more about SJCG, visit the web site at www.sjcg.net*