

ABC Life Literacy Canada moves to advance health literacy in Canada

(Toronto, ON – January 13, 2016) – ABC Life Literacy Canada (ABC) is proud to announce the launch of *ABC Health Matters*, a groundbreaking new health literacy project. With the support of AbbVie Corporation, this pilot project will develop and deliver a new health literacy program in Ontario this fall. The goal of *ABC Health Matters* is to empower Canadians to manage their health more effectively by increasing their confidence when talking about and making decisions regarding health matters with family, friends and health professionals.

“ABC is very proud to be launching this pilot project to improve health literacy for Canadians,” said Gillian Mason, President, ABC Life Literacy Canada. “With AbbVie’s support, ABC has developed a program that will change the lives of adults as they gain knowledge and confidence necessary to understand a complicated and often intimidating system. *ABC Health Matters* will increase skills and allow Canadians to live healthier, more engaged lives. It is our hope that we can expand this program to additional provinces in the future.”

In Canada, 60% of adults and 88% of seniors have low health literacy (Public Health Agency of Canada). These are shocking and worrisome statistics. Our ability to thrive—as individuals, families, communities and as a country—relies on good health, yet those with low health literacy are more likely to be older, less educated and live in poverty. They often misunderstand health information, misuse medication and struggle with literacy in general. By focusing on adults who are faced with these challenges, *ABC Health Matters* will make a difference in their health and, therefore, their quality of life.

“We strongly believe that improved health literacy is an important area that needs attention particularly as our population increases in age. It is through supporting such initiatives as *ABC Health Matters* that we are taking a step forward in making a positive impact in healthcare sustainability,” said Stéphane Lassignardie, General Manager, AbbVie Canada.

The program features a workbook and a three-hour workshop that provides participants with the knowledge and tools to communicate and manage issues about health more readily. Topics covered include: understanding health care in Ontario (Health Cards, Telehealth Ontario and health care options) working with pharmacists and health care professionals, actively thinking about your health and advocating for your (and your family’s) health. The workbook is available as a free download at ABCHealthMatters.ca.

ABC Health Matters will be delivered in community and learning centres and provides volunteer opportunities for health professionals to engage in improving the health literacy of Canadians by assisting in the delivery of workshops, in partnership with literacy practitioners. The program launches this winter in locations across Ontario.

“Lovell Drugs is proud to be the oldest, and one of the largest, independent drug store chains in Ontario. Our strength has always been our relationship with our customers and the community,” said Rita Winn, Chief Operating Officer, Lovell Drugs. “*ABC Health Matters* workshops present volunteer opportunities to connect our health experts directly with people in our communities. Together we can improve health literacy and build stronger communities.”

About ABC Life Literacy Canada

ABC Life Literacy Canada is a non-profit organization that inspires Canadians to increase their literacy and essential skills. We mobilize business, government and communities to support lifelong learning and achieve our goals through leadership in programs, communications and partnerships. We envision a Canada where everyone has the skills they need to live a fully engaged life. For the latest news and information on adult literacy please visit www.abclifeliteracy.ca. Follow us on Twitter (@abclifeliteracy). For more information about *ABC Health Matters* visit ABCHealthMatters.ca.

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