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HEART TRUTH

Statement by:

The Honourable Vivienne Poy

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

THE SENATE

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HEART TRUTH

Hon. Vivienne Poy: Honourable senators, February was Heart Month in Canada. This February, the Heart and Stroke Foundation focused on outreach to women through the Heart Truth campaign.

The campaign's aim is to reach women with the prevention message because heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death for women. That fact is surprising, is it not? The media has tended to portray heart disease as a "middle-aged man's disease." As women, we have tended to ignore our own risk factors. Only one in eight women is aware that heart disease and stroke are our biggest health concerns.

On February 24, I had the honour of hosting a press conference in Toronto for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada to reach out to Canadian women of Chinese heritage with the Heart Truth message.

According to the organizers, the press conference was "an overwhelming success." All the major national Chinese-Canadian media were present and a Chinese language public service announcement will continue to run on national Chinese-Canadian media throughout 2009.

Heart Truth's message is that much of the risk of heart disease and stroke for women is preventable and is caused by our lifestyles. Many of us work outside our homes and we are responsible for our children, our households and sometimes our elderly parents. It is difficult to find enough time to exercise and eat well, even though we know we should. If we are feeling discomfort and fatigue, as busy women, we may dismiss the symptoms and fail to seek medical advice.

The Canadian population is aging and more women are suffering from heart disease. Unfortunately, women seniors are not always taken seriously by the medical profession. Even if women are diagnosed, we are often less likely to receive prompt and intensive medical treatment.

Honourable senators, we need to take charge of our own health and warn the women in our lives to do the same. The foundation has provided all women senators with the Heart Truth message and a red dress pin, the symbol of Heart Truth, to remind honourable senators to take care of themselves and their families throughout the year.
