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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SOUTH ASIAN HEALTH INSTITUTE

SURREY – Fraser Health has launched the South Asian Health Institute (SAHI) to better understand the health needs of the South Asian population and support the implementation of evidence-informed programs to enable patients and their health care providers manage chronic conditions.

South Asian people have a higher propensity to develop chronic diseases, and they are four times more likely to experience coronary disease and diabetes due to a combination of hereditary and environmental factors.

When diabetes is not well managed or properly treated, it can lead to serious problems such as heart and kidney disease, eye problems, nerve damage, avoidable complications and early death.

Coronary disease is the most common cause of premature death among South Asians and research studies indicate that South Asians will suffer heart attacks at an earlier age and often without symptoms and warning.

“Medical research has shown that people of South Asian descent are more likely to have chronic conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease,” said Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid, Minister of Health. “Focusing on the cause of the problem and on prevention is better for the patient as well as the health care system.”

Fraser Health has the third largest South Asian population in Canada with over 182,000 South Asian people living in the area served by Fraser Health.

“Fraser Health has a variety of initiatives that focus on meeting the unique health challenges of different populations within Fraser Health,” said Dr. Nigel Murray, President and Chief Executive Officer, Fraser Health Authority. “With the development of SAHI, our goal is to facilitate, in a culturally appropriate way, what research tells us: preventative lifestyle choices, early intervention, and management can reduce the prevalence of chronic disease such as diabetes, coronary disease, and renal disease.”

“The cost of late interventions related to chronic diseases is significant for individuals, families and the province’s health care system,” said Dr. Arun Garg, Program Medical Director, Laboratory, Medicine and Pathology Program and SAHI Medical Lead. “Through SAHI, we want to shift the focus to preventing health complications rather than fixing them.”

SAHI will build on current Fraser Health programs, services and partnerships and foster new collaborations aimed at improving the health and wellness of the South Asian community.

About Fraser Health

[Fraser Health](http://www.fraserhealth.ca) provides a wide range of integrated health services to the largest and fastest growing population in B.C. The health authority is committed to improving the health of the population and the quality of life of more than 1.7 million people living in communities from Burnaby to White Rock to Hope.

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Quick facts

- Fraser Health is BC's largest and fastest growing health authority, serving 1.7 million people, or one out of every three British Columbians.
- Fraser Health's population has doubled since 1986, and by 2020, our population is expected to grow by 20 per cent, or another 327,000 people.
- Fraser Health is home to 32 per cent of BC citizens over the age of 65, and by 2020, the over 65 age group in our region is expected to increase by about 49 per cent, or another 104,500 people.

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