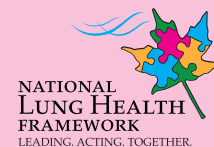


# Featured programs for technology-enhanced engagement



## Featured Programs

Unique and innovative respiratory health programs are happening across Canada, in all jurisdictions and dealing with a variety of respiratory diseases. This *Featured Programs* information sheet describes programs that show a range of applications of new communications technologies. These programs are in various locations in Canada and are targeted at different audiences.

## RRC database

The programs highlighted in this *Featured Programs* sheet have been selected from the Respiratory Resources Canada (RRC) database. RRC is a bilingual database of programs that show “who is doing what, where” in respiratory health in Canada. Programs in RRC promote strong partnerships, develop and apply best practices, and may be replicated in other situations

## What is the National Lung Health Framework?

The RRC database is one of the resources available through the National Lung Health Framework. The Framework is a comprehensive, strategic plan of action to improve respiratory health for all Canadians. Developed by and for stakeholders across sectors, disciplines and jurisdictions—with the vital support of the federal government—the Framework ensures the coordinated development and implementation of policies, programs and services across the country. It guides investment by highlighting successes and gaps, and identifies opportunities for maximizing results. The Framework operates under the guidance of a volunteer Steering Committee and with the support of the Lung Association and the Government of Canada.

Previous *Featured Programs* information sheets, on other topics, are available from the National Lung Health Framework website.

Communications technology is a fact of life for Canadians today.

- In 2010, over 80% of Canadian households had access to the Internet
- At the end of June 2011, there were over 25 million Canadian wireless subscribers; of these, 43% (10.8 million) included data plans
- Almost half of Canadians have a Facebook account
- Over 60% of physicians are using smartphones

## The Challenge

The respiratory health community in Canada has a history of providing valuable information and support to patients, their families, and health care professionals. Methods of engaging with these audiences have traditionally included radio, television, and paper-based media.

Canadians of all ages, in all regions of the country, and in all walks of life, now access information in ways that were unheard of until only a few years ago. Popular social media allow people to connect with friends or with others who share similar interests and concerns. New tools allow for video interaction, and mobile devices help people stay virtually connected from almost anywhere. Health care professionals incorporate communications devices into their daily work for a variety of uses.

Communications technology is especially important to those

- in remote regions
- with busy, active and mobile lives
- who live with conditions that compromise their health and keep them close to home

With a variety of technologies and tools available to them, respiratory health stakeholders are looking for ways to leverage the advantages of communications technologies. Innovative programs can overcome some of the challenges of capacity in remote areas, and can provide relevant, useful, and affordable support to patients and health care providers

## The Response

The National Lung Health Framework is a Canadian initiative designed to improve lung health across the country by promoting collaborative and coordinated action among health care professionals, policy makers, researchers, clinicians, advocates and other stakeholders.

The Framework encourages stakeholders to use a variety of ways to engage with their audiences. While traditional approaches such as radio, television, and print media are relevant to one kind of audience, a growing number of constituents prefer to respond to engagement activities using newer communications tools.

Stakeholders can use communications technologies to

- provide support and care to individuals and to groups unable to meet in person
- provide current information
- engage audiences who may not use more traditional media

Many organizations are experimenting with using these new tools to engage with their audiences. The National Lung Health Framework encourages organizations to share their own experiences and to learn from the experiences of others.

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## FEATURED PROGRAMS

Social media programs and applications provide an additional means for respiratory health stakeholders to connect with their audiences.

This *Featured Programs* information sheet describes some of the technology-based programs that stakeholders use to engage their audiences. Check RRC for additional programs!

## Quit Happens

New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador

Quit Happens supports bar and restaurant staff in their efforts to quit smoking. The program is based on the Leave The Pack Behind program from Ontario, and is funded by Health Canada. The program uses a combination of social media and personal contact.

Social media allow the young adult staff in bars and restaurants to get information about the program and to support each other as they quit smoking. Postings on the facebook page provide tips, ideas, and words of support. A posting on kijiji prompted over 100 "likes" on the facebook page, as people encouraged their friends to visit. The QR code on a printed poster links smartphone users to additional information.

Young adult staff at New Brunswick Lung Association contact restaurant staff as they smoke on their breaks. They talk to them about the program, introduce the tools, and encourage them to start thinking about quitting.

Restaurant owners and managers also have social media tools available. The web site [www.quithappens.ca](http://www.quithappens.ca) uses a menu format to list practical ideas for supporting staff quit attempts. The Canadian Food and Restaurant Association Atlantic uses tweets, email, and online e-news to deliver the message to its members.

[www.quithappens.ca](http://www.quithappens.ca)

## COPD Canada Patient Network National

COPD Canada Patient Network is a volunteer group of patients that provides peer-to-peer support to Canadians living with COPD, and to their families and caregivers. COPD patients, especially those in advanced stages of the disease, often aren't able to get out as often as they'd like to. COPD Canada uses its website and online discussion forums to provide valuable support and social connections.

The COPD Canada web site presents information about the disease, tests, treatments, medications, equipment, patient self-care, advocacy, etc. Much of the site is publicly available, and includes general information for families and caregivers as well as for patients.

Registered members use the community forums to contact each other with messages to individuals or to the group. Separate forums for patients and caregivers allow members of each group to share the ups and downs of living with the disease.

COPD Canada also hosts its Annual General Meeting on the web site. Available to members only, the meeting is open online for 24 hours while members discuss and vote on financial and other organization matters.

[www.copdcanada.ca](http://www.copdcanada.ca)

## How You Can Make a Difference

If you would like to help make a difference and improve the lung health of Canadians there are things you can do.

Promote what is happening in your field and in your community. Share information about successful activities with others across Canada through the Respiratory Resources Canada database. The information will be seen by people across the country working in respiratory health.

Make it happen. Have you wanted to start a much-needed initiative in your community and were not sure where to get started or how to make it happen? Make use of Respiratory Resources Canada. It is a searchable database where you can find out what is happening all across Canada. You can also use the database to connect with individuals who can provide you with helpful information and share their own successes.

Go to [www.lunghealthframework.ca](http://www.lunghealthframework.ca) for more information on the database and what it can do for you.

## The Asthma, Allergies, and Eczema in First Nations, Metis, & Inuit Communities Telehealth Series

Health Canada's First Nations Inuit Health – Alberta Region, in conjunction with Alberta Health Services, combines information technologies and telecommunications to provide clinical and educational services to First Nations communities in Alberta. Patients and health care workers benefit, as the cost and inconvenience of travel for health care is reduced, and health care workers have greater opportunities for professional and career growth.

Clinical telehealth sessions typically involve videoconferencing between a patient and a health service provider, such as a physician consult session. Videoconferences also allow family in the home community to visit patients in hospital.

Educational sessions offered via teleconference and videoconference inform patients, communities, and health care workers. Topics include Child and Youth topics, and Healthy Living.

Asthma, Allergies, and Eczema in First Nations, Metis, & Inuit Communities is one series of educational videoconferences. The six sessions cover areas such as managing the condition, advocating for care, and incorporating cultural practices into healthy living.

[docs.firstnationsth.ca/asthma-series.htm](http://docs.firstnationsth.ca/asthma-series.htm)

## Technology Application Unit (TAU)

The TAU, located at the Intensive Care Unit at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, researches the use of information technology and handheld communications tools in medicine, specifically in critical care applications.

Research areas include the evaluation of handheld computers to

- access up-to-date-medical reference information (e.g. protocols and pharmacopoeias)
- track patients' vital signs and alert rapid response teams when intervention is required
- track educational experiences of trainees

[medtau.org](http://medtau.org)