FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

KICK THOSE “BUTTS” WITH QUIT & GET FIT™

January 19 – 25 is National Non-smoking Week

TORONTO, ON (January 21, 2014) – A popular smoking cessation program of the Ontario Lung Association, Quit & Get Fit, will once again be available at select community fitness facilities across the province to help people quit smoking and increase their fitness levels. The program is based on research showing that physical activity can help reduce cravings and manage withdrawal symptoms associated with quitting smoking.

“Our evaluation shows that Quit & Get Fit has a 40 per cent success rate at the end of an eight-week program,” says Sherry Zarins, director of health promotion and public education, Ontario Lung Association. “For people trying to quit with no supports, or “cold turkey”, the success rate is about five per cent. Quit & Get Fit participants also benefit from an increase in physical activity. And, for those who are unable to quit, they smoke fewer cigarettes a day and are not smoking as soon after getting up in the morning.”

Tobacco use is responsible for more than 13,000 premature deaths every year in Ontario, making it the number one cause of preventable illness and death in our province.

“There are approximately two million people who smoke in Ontario and more than half of them want to quit,” says Robert Schwartz, executive director and principal investigator with the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit. “But, it is very difficult to break the grip of nicotine addiction and, for some people, multiple attempts are made before they finally manage to quit smoking for good. Providing different supports in a variety of settings means that more people will find the quitting method that’s right for them.”

Quit & Get Fit is a novel program that integrates the principles of quitting smoking into a fitness based environment. Delivered by personal trainers who have completed the Ontario Lung Association Quit & Get Fit training module, the program leverages the trainers’ coaching, motivation and gentle accountability skills. The program typically includes 16 one-hour personal training sessions. For best results, it is recommended that the sessions be completed within eight weeks -- two sessions per week.

Ontario Lung Association will be partnering with a variety of fitness facilities in select communities across the province to offer Quit & Get to members and non-members. The Ontario Lung Association is also pleased to announce a partnership in development with Health Systems Group to bring Quit & Get Fit to Ontario workplaces. Health Systems Group (HSG) provides wellness consulting and program management services for employers, focusing on outcomes for both individual employees and the organization as a whole.

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“At Health Systems Group, we believe that a healthy workplace culture contributes to employee vitality, productively and resilience,” says Lee-Ann Charszewski, senior consultant, wellness services, Health Systems Group. “Having a smoke-free workforce is an important part of having a healthy and productive workplace. We are thrilled to add Quit & Get Fit to our suite of offerings for our corporate clients.”

To learn more about Quit & Get Fit and where it is available, visit www.quitandgetfit.ca

ABOUT QUIT & GET FIT

Quit & Get Fit is based on scientific evidence demonstrating that regular physical activity can help reduce cravings and manage withdrawal symptoms associated with quitting smoking. Started as a pilot program of the Ontario Lung Association in 2010, Quit & Get Fit grew from 10 locations the first year to 28 locations by 2012. The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit has conducted a 3-year comprehensive evaluation of Quit & Get Fit and deemed it a “promising intervention for promoting smoking cessation, reducing consumption of cigarettes and increasing engagement in physical activity.”

ABOUT THE ONTARIO LUNG ASSOCIATION

The Ontario Lung Association is a registered charity that assists, educates and empowers individuals living with or caring for others with lung disease. The Lung Association provides programs and services to patients and health-care providers, invests in lung research and campaigns for improved policies on lung health. For information on lung health, call our Lung Health Information Line at 1-888-344-LUNG (5864), which is staffed by certified respiratory educators, or visit www.on.lung.ca. You can also follow us on Twitter @OntarioLung and Facebook.

-30-

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