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Canadian Sexual Health Site Awarded Top Five Honour at UN Summit

OB/GYN society's **sexualityandu.ca** honoured as one of the world's best e-projects

(Ottawa) The World Summit Awards, presented as part of the United Nations Summit on the Information Society in Tunisia, will recognize the Canadian sexual health website www.sexualityandu.ca today as one of the top five e-health projects in the world.

The **sexualityandu.ca** site, administered by the Contraception Awareness Project of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, was selected from approximately 20,000 candidates from over 168 countries. From these candidates, the top five projects in eight different categories will be honoured as the best e-projects in the world, at today's award gala at the UN summit in Tunis, Tunisia.

The World Summit Awards, which are presented every two years, celebrate the best e-contents and applications that use technology to share information and knowledge for the benefit of all members of society. The awards are delivered in partnership with several United Nations agencies, including UNIDO and UNESCO, and presenters of the awards are to include international heads of state.

Last July, **sexualityandu.ca** was selected by a national panel to represent Canada in the e-health site category. Then, on September 12, an expert international panel selected **sexualityandu.ca** from over 750 finalist entries as one of the best five e-health projects in the world.

"This website is an important project, and it's a great honour to see it recognized on a global scale," said Dr. Robert Reid, the former chair of the Contraception Awareness Project, who will be on hand at the gala to accept the award. "From the very beginning, we've tried to make something truly unique, rather than just another typical health site".

The **sexualityandu.ca** site was originally launched in 2001 in response to high rates of unplanned pregnancy and an increasing number of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Canada, particularly in Canadian youth. The bilingual site offers comprehensive sexual health information provided by a team of over 60 expert health professionals, and includes individually tailored sections for teens, adults, parents, educators and healthcare professionals. The site is also highly interactive, and uses a wide range of

games, quizzes, videos and animations to educate people on subjects such as contraception, STIs and sexual health.

The Internet, offering users anonymity and privacy, has proven an extremely effective and popular medium for promoting sexual health – so far this year, the site has received over 1.6 million visits. As an online resource, the site is able to sidestep some of the embarrassment that may stand between people and reliable sexual health information.

“There are many myths and much misinformation out there when it comes to sexual health, and so many people still remain in the dark when it comes to sexuality” said Dr. Amanda Black, the Contraception Awareness Project’s current chair. “This site is about giving people the information they need to make educated decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.”

sexualityandu.ca will be honoured alongside other e-health projects from Australia, India, the Czech Republic and the United States.

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