



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**January 22, 2015**

### **The Sandbox Project hosts 5<sup>th</sup> national conference to improve health for young Canadians**

**TORONTO, Ont. (January 22, 2015)** — Building a better future for Canada’s next generation took the spotlight at a national conference featuring some of the country’s leading experts in child and youth health.

The Sandbox Project hosted its 5<sup>th</sup> national conference and workshop on January 22nd, 2015 at TELUS House in Toronto, creating a venue for experts and conference participants to work together on strategies to improve health outcomes for young people throughout Canada.

This year’s conference keynote was delivered by The Sandbox Project’s founder, the Honourable Dr. K. Kellie Leitch, Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women. As cabinet minister, pediatric orthopaedic surgeon and author of 2007’s “Reaching for the top: A report by the advisor on healthy children and youth,” she spoke about a wide range of child and youth health issues, including the importance of young worker injury prevention.

“Canada’s youth are our present and our future with many of them already contributing to our economy,” said Minister Leitch. “We have a responsibility to keep young Canadians safe and healthy by actively engaging and educating them on injury prevention. Safety habits learned now will stay with them throughout their working lives.”

During the morning plenary session, leadership of The Sandbox Project provided updates on progress made in several key areas over the past year. The conference afternoon saw multi-disciplinary teams engaged in strategic problem-solving sessions to tackle some of the sector’s biggest challenges. Facilitated by leaders in research, non-profit, and communications, some of the afternoon’s tasks included envisioning a shared set of child and youth health indicators; creating effective health awareness messaging for Canadian families; and drafting a plan for a national food allergy strategy.

“The Sandbox Project’s goal is to eliminate redundancies, increase efficiencies and develop underutilized capacity in the child and youth health sector,” said Dr. Christine Hampson, President and CEO of The Sandbox Project. “By bringing likeminded organizations together once a year The Sandbox Project can identify issues we are all facing and tackle them together. We require collaboration between organizations that do not typically learn from one another because they are focused on different subject areas – be that Injury Prevention, Healthy Weights, Mental Health or the Environment”.

At this year’s conference, The Sandbox Project was pleased to announce a new funding partner for Phase II of the Sandbox Youth Mental Health Initiative (SYMHI). The SYMHI is an electronic mental health platform that will empower and support mental health professionals to assess, diagnose and treat common mental illnesses (ADHD, Anxiety Disorder and Depression) and to



help empower youth to actively participate in their mental health care in collaboration with their primary health care providers. Building on the successful completion of Phase I of the project in 2014, Medavie Health Foundation joins TELUS Health, the Graham Boeckh Foundation, the RBC Children's Mental Health Project, the Echo Foundation, and TeenMentalHealth.org as a funding partner for Phase II.

"We are focused on funding unique initiatives that will directly impact youth mental health," said Patty Faith, Executive Director, Medavie Health Foundation. "The Sandbox Youth Mental Health Initiative aligns with our Foundation and allows us to partner with other like-minded organizations that also advocate for healthy change."

The Sandbox Project was also pleased to announce that following a site selection process, the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Kingston, Ontario, was chosen as the Phase II project site.

**About The Sandbox Project:**

The vision of The Sandbox Project is to make Canada the healthiest place on Earth for children and youth to grow up. As a catalyst for collaboration, Sandbox is focused on improving children and youth health outcomes with respect to injury prevention, growing healthy bodies, mental health and the environment. For more information, visit <http://sandboxproject.ca>

-30-

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