

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Alcohol consumption affecting the number of cancer cases in Ontario** *Cancer Care Ontario report finds thousands of cases could be prevented*

London, ON – As many as 3,000 new cancer cases each year in Ontario can be attributed to alcohol consumption, according to [a report released today by Cancer Care Ontario](#).

The findings of the report demonstrate that a substantial number of cancers diagnosed in Ontario could be prevented by reducing alcohol consumption in the population, but that more awareness is needed. The report also shows that in the South West region, approximately 11% of people report drinking in excess of alcohol consumption recommendations for cancer prevention.

“We have raised awareness of the harm caused by drinking and driving, says Dr. Jan Owen, Regional Primary Care Lead for the South West Regional Cancer Program. “Now it is time to raise awareness of the strong link between alcohol and cancer.”

Drinking has been shown to contribute to several cancers including:

- oral cancer
- esophageal
- larynx
- liver
- colorectal
- breast

Understanding of the effects of alcohol consumption on cancer risk has been found to be low, with only one third of Canadians aware of the link between drinking and cancer. “Many Ontarians are aware of the link between tobacco use and cancer, but there is much less awareness on the increased risk for cancer that comes with drinking alcohol,” says Dr. Linda Rabeneck, vice president of Prevention and Cancer Control for Cancer Care Ontario. “That’s why this report is not only helpful for our partners in the public health system, but also for Ontarians who are consuming alcohol.”

According to recommendations from the World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research, if alcoholic drinks are consumed, the number of drinks should be limited to no more than two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women.

Drinking in excess of alcohol cancer prevention recommendations varied considerably across the province; it is clear, however, that Ontarians with higher incomes and those living in rural areas are more likely to exceed the recommendations than those with lower incomes or in urban areas.

The South West Regional Cancer Program, together with Public Health, supports Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines that help Canadians moderate their alcohol consumption and reduce their immediate and long-term alcohol-related harm. To learn more about Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines, please visit the [Canadian Centre on Substance Misuse \(CCSA\)](#).

**Telephone interviews with Dr. Jan Owen available upon request.**

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**South West Regional Cancer Program** oversees the delivery and quality of cancer services for the counties of Grey, Bruce, Huron, Perth, Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin, and part of Norfolk. It is one of 13 Regional Cancer Programs created by Cancer Care Ontario in 2005 to ensure cancer care is delivered according to province-wide quality standards.

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