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Media Release

Exercise Program for Frail Older Adults Adapted for Alberta First Nations' Communities

EDMONTON, AB, March 22, 2006—The Alberta Centre for Active Living is expanding its Active Independence: Home Support Exercise Program for frail homebound older adults into First Nations' communities across Alberta. This healthy aging program trains home-care staff to deliver a series of exercises and healthy eating information to homebound clients.

This program (funded by the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation, Alberta Health and Wellness, and Health Canada) has been offered in most Alberta Regional Health Authorities over the last three years. (The program was originally developed in Ontario by the Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging.)

The exercises build older adults' strength, flexibility, and balance, and help to improve their endurance. Improvements in these areas can help older adults maintain their independence and stay in their own homes longer.

The centre has now trained home-care staff in about 45 First Nations' communities from north of Fort MacMurray to the Blood Tribe in southern Alberta.

We worked with the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch at Health Canada to identify communities and to adapt the program to community needs. For example, as fresh fruit and vegetables are not always available in more remote First Nations' communities, the centre adapted its program manual to include canned fruit and vegetables. The manual also includes culturally appropriate foods such as wild meat, fish, bannock, and berries.

Jennifer Dechaine, Active Independence Coordinator at the Alberta Centre for Active Living, sees the program as a way to move beyond basic treatment of health problems to prevention of future problems. Responses from seniors indicate that the Active Independence program has resulted in better eating habits and overall health and has improved their independence and confidence.

For more information about [Active Independence](#), visit the Alberta Centre for Active Living's web site.

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