



For Immediate Release — Tuesday, March 29, 2016

Alberta Blue Cross grant supporting unique mental health initiative at University of Lethbridge

The University of Lethbridge Health Centre, thanks in part to a grant from Alberta Blue Cross, is helping boost campus mental health – 10 minutes at a time.

Alberta Blue Cross recently invited post-secondary institutions to apply for funding to support its mandate of promoting wellness and active living for young Albertans. The U of L applied for funding of its innovative Take Ten: Make Movement Fun program and was awarded \$10,000, the full amount possible for a university of its size.

The Take Ten: Make Movement Fun program invites the University community to take part in a variety of fun, physical activities in 10-minute increments throughout the day.

“The original idea was to use the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines, which talk about 10-minute increments of activity that can be spent doing any fun exercise that is aerobic in nature,” says Lori Weber, director of the U of L Health Centre.

Weber partnered with applied studies student Janelle Downing-Baker (kinesiology) to bring the program to the University community this semester and will offer it again in Fall 2016.

Pickleball, Hula Hoops, Frisbees, yoga and skipping ropes are just some of the activities that students, staff and faculty have been invited to take part in for quick, 10-minute intervals.

“Getting busy, serious people to slow down and enjoy a few minutes of fun activity can be difficult at first – but once they stop, you start to see the smiles on their faces and in just 10 minutes, they are refreshed and energized,” says Downing-Baker. “I’m looking forward to doing this program again in the fall semester.”

Take Ten: Make Movement Fun can be adapted to any school or workplace as a way to encourage an active lifestyle, reduce sedentary behaviour, and positively affect mental health.

"I commend Alberta Blue Cross for initiating their grant program and for recognizing and funding our innovative, and fun, way to bring wellness to our campus," says Downing-Baker.

Downing-Baker will host two sessions on campus this week, including Tuesday, March 29 from 2 to 4 p.m. in the 1st Choice Savings Centre, Level 2, and Thursday, March 31 from 2 to 4 p.m. in the University Hall Atrium.

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Contact:

Trevor Kenney, News & Information Manager
403-329-2710
403-360-7639 (cell)
trevor.kenney@uleth.ca

Lori Weber, Director, U of L Health Centre
403-329-2483
lori.weber@uleth.ca