



April 16, 2013

**For immediate release**

## **Seeking community leaders to “switch chairs for a day” in support of spinal cord injury awareness and rehabilitation**

CALGARY – The third annual Chair-Leaders: Enabling Access Event in support of the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta) and Calgary Health Trust will see community leaders in Calgary “switch chairs for a day” on Friday, May 3, opting to take a seat in a wheelchair rather than a desk chair. The event will help participants gain first-hand experience about the accessibility and mobility obstacles those with disabilities face on a daily basis.

Participants will spend their entire day in a wheelchair going about their everyday activities. The Kent Hehr, MLA for Calgary Buffalo, will be on hand to deliver a motivational speech at Calgary Rotary Challenger Park at 8:30 a.m. before all participants are loaded onto Handi-Bus and taken to their workplace for the day.

“Through my work, I’ve had the pleasure of working with persons whom rely on a wheelchair for mobility. This left me with the assumption that I understood the barriers in our environment, but it was the wrong assumption,” explains Teren Clarke, CPA (Alberta) Executive Director. “Spending a day in a chair while conducting my usual work made me realize I had much to learn about barriers in my community. I am really excited to participate in the event again this year.”

**CPA (Alberta) and Calgary Health Trust are looking for media personalities and local community leaders to participate in this event on May 3 in support of spinal cord injury, rehabilitation and care, ensuring the best care is possible here in Calgary.**

“Over 4,300 Canadians will suffer a spinal cord injury this year,” said Jill Olynyk, Interim CEO for Calgary Health Trust, “Events like Chair-Leaders help to raise awareness around the unique needs of those who live with a spinal cord injury. Whether traumatic or degenerative, spinal cord injuries can affect many people in our community. Through the partnership with CPA (Alberta) and the Tertiary Neuro Rehabilitation Program at Foothills Medical Centre, funds raised will support the specialized resources and patient care for these individuals and ensure they gain the skills and independence to transition back into their homes as seamlessly as possible.”

Funds raised from the 2013 event will be shared between the CPA (Alberta) to expand and enhance its programs and services and Calgary Health Trust in support of the Tertiary Neuro Rehabilitation Program, which serves patients and families from southern Alberta to interior British Columbia and western Saskatchewan.

For more information about participating in the event, contact:

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[calgaryhealthtrust.ca/chairleaders](http://calgaryhealthtrust.ca/chairleaders)

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*Calgary Health Trust connects donor passions with health care needs. Together we are touching lives in our community every day by raising funds for enhanced technology, programs and services at the Foothills Medical Centre, Peter Lougheed Centre, Rockyview General Hospital, Women's Health, Carewest continuing care centres and other community health programs and facilities. For information on Calgary Health Trust, visit [www.calgaryhealthtrust.ca](http://www.calgaryhealthtrust.ca).*

*The Canadian Paraplegic Association (Alberta) was founded in 1961. Since then, it has been a leader in offering support, direct service, information and advocacy to Albertans with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities. Whether it be assisting a newly spinal cord injured child or adult, lobbying for better public transportation, or helping to create a more inclusive community, CPA (Alberta) embraces the approach that there is more than one way. For more information, visit [www.cpa-ab.org](http://www.cpa-ab.org).*

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**For media inquiries, contact:**

**Calgary Health Trust**

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