



November 15, 2016

**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**November 17 is World Prematurity Day: Celebrating our tiniest patients**

**Sir Issac Newton, Mark Twain, Winston Churchill, and Stevie Wonder all share one thing in common: they were all born premature.**

1 in 8 babies born in Calgary will need the care of the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) - many because they are simply born too early and too small.

On November 17, we are asking for your help to raise awareness about pre-term birth and the amazing care given by the NICUs. Pre-term birth is something that very few people understand until it happens in their family.

**Quick Facts:**

- Every year more than 15 million children are born prematurely worldwide and over one million will die, making premature birth the leading cause of death among newborns.
- Calgary has one of the highest rates of premature births in Canada.
- The effects of prematurity can vary, but have a life-long impact including to neurodevelopment, hearing, vision and respiratory systems.
- Advances made in neonatal care in the past few decades have drastically increased survival rates among premature infants and decreased long term effects on their development.
- Babies born as young as 23 weeks gestation are cared for in the NICU.
- While the average term infant weighs approximately 7 ½ pounds, the smallest premature infants may weigh less than 500 grams.
- Calgary has five NICUs including the highest level of intensive care units at Foothills Medical Centre and Alberta Children's Hospital and special care nurseries at Rockyview General Hospital, Peter Lougheed Centre and South Health Campus.

**For further information contact** Valerie Ball - 403.990.7943

**About Calgary Health Trust**

*Calgary Health Trust fundraises for health care. The incredible generosity of our donors has helped to raise more than \$412 million for health care since 1996. Funds raised benefit Foothills Medical Centre, Peter Lougheed Centre, Rockyview General Hospital, South Health Campus and many community health programs and 12 Carewest care centres in our community.*