

## Press Release

### **Attention Shoppers: Free Arthritis Screening is Available From Your Local Shoppers Drug Mart/Pharmaprix Pharmacist**

#### **Arthritis Consumer Experts and the Arthritis Research Centre of Canada help develop arthritis awareness and screening initiative with Canada's largest retail drug store**

**TORONTO, ON, September 9, 2013** – A new health awareness campaign offering Canadians free arthritis prevention, screening and treatment information was announced today by Arthritis Consumer Experts (ACE), the Arthritis Research Centre of Canada (ARC), and Shoppers Drug Mart/Pharmaprix ("Shoppers"). Pharmacists at more than 1,200 Shoppers stores across Canada will be providing arthritis testing and information to Canadians as part of a three-year partnership between ACE, ARC and Shoppers Drug Mart/Pharmaprix. The initiative was announced today at a launch event in Toronto, attended by Federal Minister of Health Rona Ambrose, Canadian Institutes of Health Research Chief Scientific Officer and Vice President Dr. Jane Aubin, Shoppers Drug Mart Chief Executive Officer and President Domenic Pilla, as well as ACE and ARC executives.

Speaking at the launch, Arthritis Consumer Experts Founder and President Cheryl Koehn comments: "The arthritis community is excited to be partnering with Shoppers Drug Mart/Pharmaprix. They're on main streets across Canada, right where the more than 4.6 million Canadians with arthritis live and work. Pharmacists are a key member of an arthritis patient's healthcare team. Now, Shoppers' pharmacists will be able to share valuable arthritis information and detect or confirm arthritis with patients through innovative consumer education programs right at the pharmacy counter."

"Our Government supports initiatives that help Canadians better manage their health and improve their quality of life," says Minister Ambrose. "We are pleased to have funded research that contributed to the development of this innovative new program that will improve the quality of life of Canadians living with arthritis."

Arthritis is a significantly under-diagnosed and under-treated disease. Research shows that early diagnosis and treatment can make a critical difference to health outcomes for people living with the disease. This three-year partnership between ACE, ARC and Shoppers will provide Canadians with an important opportunity to get screened for the most common types of arthritis and make a significant difference in the lives of individuals and families living with it.

Through the partnership, valuable and easily accessible programs on arthritis prevention, detection/screening, treatment and research will reach millions of consumers.

"We're thrilled that Shoppers Drug Mart/Pharmaprix is putting our research to work by launching this important initiative in its stores," says Dr. John Esdaile, scientific director of the Arthritis Research Centre of Canada, "Early diagnosis of arthritis is critical to slowing the progress of this disease. That's why Arthritis Research Centre of Canada scientists have invested enormous energy in developing the screening exam tool for pharmacists. We hope Canadians will get screened through this program and get access to the care they need to improve their health and quality of life."



Consumers can use in-store arthritis tools and participate in a personal consultation with the pharmacist to help detect or manage arthritis. During the consultation, the pharmacist reviews data from the innovative ArthritisID screening exam developed by Arthritis Consumer Experts and the Arthritis Research Centre of Canada, along with other health information, to provide appropriate, personalized recommendations based on the latest classification criteria of the American College of Rheumatology and the Canadian Rheumatology Association. An online version of the ArthritisID screening exam is also available on the [shoppersdrugmart.com](http://shoppersdrugmart.com) website to help consumers identify whether they may have arthritis, and prevent or delay its onset.

“Shoppers Drug Mart pharmacists are already actively involved in managing complex chronic diseases, like diabetes, heart disease and now arthritis,” says Domenic Pilla, President and CEO, Shoppers Drug Mart. “By becoming increasingly involved in managing complex chronic diseases, pharmacists are helping to ease the burden on the healthcare system, while also helping to improve patient care.”

### **Women and Arthritis and Pharmacy**

Of the more than 4.6 million Canadians diagnosed and living with arthritis, two out of three, or 2.8 million, are women. As part of the partnership, ACE, ARC and Shoppers Drug Mart conducted a national survey of more than 1,000 women living with arthritis. The study found that Canadian women with arthritis identify health and wellness as their top life priority but do not feel confident in making the right choices for their arthritis care. They wanted access to vital facts about screening, signs and symptoms, treatment and what they can do on a daily basis to protect their joints and manage pain. In response, ACE, ARC and Shoppers Drug Mart have developed tools and advice to help women assess their joint health and prevent and manage arthritis.

Commenting on the women and arthritis program, Koehn said: “The diagnosis of arthritis for a woman should not be taken lightly. Some autoimmune forms of arthritis are very serious and even life threatening. We have specifically designed tools for women to make arthritis health accessible and personalized for women either in-store or online. By recognizing arthritis symptoms and seeking an early, accurate diagnosis, most women are able to manage their pain and regain control of their lives.”

### **About Arthritis Consumer Experts**

Arthritis Consumer Experts (ACE) provides science-based information, education and support programs to people with arthritis to help them take control of their disease and improve their quality of life. ACE actively advocates on arthritis health issues through ACE’s JointHealth™ family of programs and the National Arthritis Awareness Program. Please visit [jointhealth.org](http://jointhealth.org), join us on <http://www.facebook.com/ACEJointHealth>, follow us on Twitter @ACEJointHealth or download our app <http://bit.ly/GetArthritisIDPRO>.

### **About the Arthritis Research Centre of Canada**

The Arthritis Research Centre of Canada (ARC) is an international leader in medical research on Canada’s most debilitating chronic disease. ARC conducts consumer-driven clinical research to help reduce the burden of arthritis, and give people with arthritis better, more timely and cost-effective solutions for people living with their disease. With research centres in British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec, ARC’s research is making a critical difference in arthritis diagnosis, prognosis, prevention, care outcomes and quality of life issues for millions of arthritis patients. [www.arthritisresearch.ca](http://www.arthritisresearch.ca).

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