"Active living can be defined in broad terms as healthy lifestyle choices that involve physical activities to enhance many aspects of our lives. Active living is based on the belief that physical activity improves individual well-being and the quality of life, in our communities."

Shirley McClellan, Minister

GOVERNMENT RELEASES NEW STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVE LIVING FOR ALBERTANS

Providing opportunities to lead healthy and more active lifestyles to enhance quality of life is the objective of 23 recommendations made by the Alberta Active Living Task Force, which was established by Community Development Minister Shirley McClellan. Of the 23 recommendations for active living strategies, four have been implemented, eight are in the implementation stage, ten recommendations are under consideration and one will not be considered.

Six government departments are involved in active living strategies. Community Development, Health, Education, Municipal Affairs, Justice, and Family and Social Services participate on a Minister's Co-ordinating Council and work closely with community leaders. Strategies underway are funded within the budgets of the six participating departments.

"Our government recognizes that active living is vital to the health and well-being of Albertans, as well as healthy, prosperous communities," McClellan said. "The task force report highlights this linkage. It underpins a commitment made by Canadian ministers responsible for fitness, recreation and sport to reduce inactivity in Canadians by 10% over the five-year period 1998 to 2003, and to organize budget resources and initiatives within our respective jurisdictions to support this joint target."

The Alberta Active Living Task Force, established in January 1997, was headed by volunteer chair James Gray. Gray is chairman and CEO of Canadian Hunter Exploration Ltd. The task force's final report presented to McClellan followed a series of public meetings across Alberta in the spring of 1997.
"Based on what our task force heard from Albertans, we have made recommendations that involve schools, regional health authorities, and other community institutions in promoting active living," said Gray. The task force made recommendations in four areas: community recreation, physical education programs in schools, active living in the workplace, and a community-oriented "Active Living Champions" program.

A national study released earlier this year by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute emphasizes the importance of active living and the need for lifestyle changes. The national study, 1997 Physical Activity Benchmarks, warns that Canadians are risking their health and quality of life because of dangerously inactive lifestyles.

"Good health helps us to reach the goals we set for ourselves and our families," said Halvar Jonson, Minister of Health. "It also helps our children reach their full potential. Good health, however, cannot be ensured by a high-quality healthy system alone; it's something that we all as a society must work on together."

"Providing students with the skills and attitudes to be active throughout their lives is an investment in our future. My department will work closely with the Co-ordinating Council to promote healthy, active schools and students," noted Education Minister Gary Mar.

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVE LIVING TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation #1**

That the Provincial Government Departments of Community Development, Education, Health, Family and Social Services, and Justice include development of "Active Life Skills for Healthy Living" in the goals and strategies of their Three Year Business Plans.

**Recommendation #2**

That the Minister of Community Development establish a Minister's Coordinating Council on Active Living comprised of relevant departments and organizations to oversee the implementation of this Alberta Active Living Strategy and ensure that a thorough follow-up evaluation is conducted.

**Recommendation #3**

That each Regional Health Authority becomes a model for programs on Active Living and healthy eating and the Active Living and nutrition staff and services be included as part of the Authorities' health promotion programs.

**Recommendation #4**

That eight regional Active Living Co-ordinators be contracted to assist in the community-based delivery of Active Living programs and services.

**Recommendation #5**

That discussions with the Alberta Medical Association and the College of Family Practice of Alberta be initiated to encourage physicians to initiate the development of a "green prescription" program similar to the New Zealand program prescribing Active Living as a treatment.

**Recommendation #6**
Develop a liaison with Health Canada to increase the effective coordinated implementation of these recommendations with the soon-to-be released Health Canada's "Physicians Superkit" and Canada's Guide to Active Living.

**Recommendation #7**

That Alberta Community Development, the department responsible for encouraging Albertans to lead active and healthy lifestyles, also be responsible for all parks and recreation corridor development in Alberta. *(This recommendation not being considered)*

**Recommendation #8**

That a capital grant program marking the province's 100th Anniversary be established to administer community grants for the development of trails throughout Alberta.

**Recommendation #9**

That Alberta TrailNet receives annual provincial association funding from the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation as a recognized recreation association, and that Alberta TrailNet be a key partner in co-ordinating and delivering the Alberta Trail Development grant program.

**Recommendation #10**

That the Community Facility Enhancement Program be modified to assist Alberta municipalities in maintaining and upgrading existing indoor/outdoor recreation infrastructure.

**Recommendation #11**

That broad-based participation become a criterion in determining ASRPWF funding to provincial sport and recreation groups.

**Recommendation #12**

That a revised physical education curriculum, with an "active life skills focus," be developed for Alberta schools and that Alberta Education provides support for the implementation of this new curriculum, including professional development for existing staff and new specialist staff.

**Recommendation #13**

That every school in Alberta has access to a specialist physical education teacher who has received teacher training specifically in "active life skills for physical education."

**Recommendation #14**

That all Alberta schools create a school environment that provides encouragement and opportunities for students to be physically active during each school day.

**Recommendation #15**
That Physical Education 30 be recognized as an acceptable optional entrance requirement for all Alberta Universities and Colleges.

**Recommendation #16**

That Alberta Universities and Colleges provide opportunities for teacher pre-service practicum preparation that focuses on lifelong physical activity.

**Recommendation #17**

That a Healthy Community School Program, modeled after the former Community School Program be developed and administered by Alberta Community Development.

**Recommendation #18**

That all operators of housing and care institutions for older adults, be required to provide facilities and resources, including appropriate staff, in order to provide opportunities for their residents to engage in regular physical activity.

**Recommendation #19**

That a special Active Living in the Workplace information and research section is established within the Alberta Centre for Well-Being.

**Recommendation #20**

That the Alberta Government take the lead role in establishing a "Model Employee Active Living Program."

**Recommendation #21**

In co-operation with the Workers Compensation Board, a fee structure be established to act as an incentive for employers to provide workplace Active Living programs.

**Recommendation #22**

Delivery of the Canadian Physical Activity, Fitness and Lifestyle Appraisal program should be expanded throughout the province and expansion should specifically ensure that the program applies to the workplace.

**Recommendation #23**

That a promotional campaign called the "Alberta Active Living Champions" program be implemented.