

Media Release

To All Canadian Media

Winnipeg Hospital partners to open China's first Medical Fitness Facility

The Wellness Institute at Seven Oaks General Hospital has led the development of China's first Medical Fitness Facility opening tomorrow in Rizhao City, Shandong Province. Under a multi-year agreement with the local hospital in Rizhao, an 80,000 square foot facility has been developed in a building formerly used as the Reception Centre for the Water Sports events in the 2008 Olympics.

Canada Wellness Institute, a new not for profit company formed by Seven Oaks Hospital has been licensed to commercialize Wellness Institute's expertise and brand in China.

The partnership in Rizhao grew out of visits to Canada by the China Hospital Association and Chinese Hospitals interested in adopting Wellness Institute's model.

In its 17 years in operation in Winnipeg Wellness Institute has become a leading expert in prescribing and supporting lifestyle medicine based on exercise, nutrition and healthy lifestyle behaviour change for the management and prevention of chronic disease. It has demonstrated success in helping people afflicted with heart, diabetes, kidney, cancer and lung disease as well as people at risk of disease, to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles.



"This is global recognition for the Wellness Institute and the credit goes to our community, which had the foresight to plan and build a facility in 1996 that is now the model for facilities in China," said Seven Oaks General Hospital President and Chief Operating Officer Carrie Solmundson. "China, like Canada, is grappling with rising incidence of chronic disease that is rooted in sedentary lifestyles, poor nutrition, and other unhealthy lifestyle behaviours," she said.

Wellness Institute is integrated with the hospital but isn't publicly funded; it's a completely self-sufficient non-profit enterprise. Profit earned by Wellness Institute in Canada, or from its consulting work in China, goes back into facilities and programs to benefit people in Manitoba.

The made in Winnipeg solution has drawn accolades from both the federal and provincial governments. Manitoba Trade and Investment and the Canadian embassy both provided advice and logistics for building relationships in China, and Canadian Ambassador to China Guy Saint Jacques is speaking at the grand opening in Rizhao along with China's Vice Minister of Health.

Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger saluted the project for its innovation and global reach earlier this week when he said, "Manitoban ingenuity has often been the envy of other provinces and countries. When there is an opportunity to help – Manitobans are always there. I'm so proud of the support that the Seven Oaks Wellness Institute and Manitoba Trade and Investment are providing our friends in China and thankful for the Chinese investment here at home."

The new facility opens to its members this week, but Canada Wellness Institute will continue to provide management training and advice with experts on site for several months. Over the long term Canada Wellness Institute will conduct annual quality assurance inspections and the Rizhao facility will be a showcase for further Canada Wellness Institute projects elsewhere in China.

Some prospective partners have signed Memoranda of Understanding and are attending the grand opening in Rizhao including partners from Hainan in southern China which is in detailed negotiations with Canada Wellness Institute to develop a second facility there.

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Additional Information: Please see two-page Media Backgrounder for additional information.

Publication quality photographs and a promotional video of the Rizhao facility are available on request. Broadcast media are also welcome to arrange to record interviews at Wellness Institute at Seven Oaks Hospital.

For interviews please contact:

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Web sites:

Wellness Institute at Seven Oaks General Hospital: www.wellnessinstitute.ca

Canada Wellness Institute at Rizhao Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine (Mandarin):

<http://www.rzhtcm.com:90/f>